

JPRS-NEA-92-076
16 JUNE 1992



JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

Near East & South Asia

JPRS-NEA-92-076

CONTENTS

16 June 1992

NEAR EAST

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Libya Reportedly Threatens To Withdraw From UMA [Casablanca AL BAYANE 16 May]	1
Algeria Rejects Seminar Supporting Libya [Beirut AL-SAFIR 26 May]	1
Egypt, Gulf States Finance CIS Islamic Centers [Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI 12 Mar]	1
Egypt Said Preventing Sudanese From Crossing to Libya [Khartoum SUNA]	2
Israeli 'Aggression' in Lebanon 'Strongly' Condemned [Tunis Radio]	2
Tunisian Official Praises Haj Efforts [Riyadh SPA]	2
Inequities Facing Arab Investment in France Examined [London AL-MAJALLAH 13 May]	3

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

PLO Finance Minister on Cooperation With Israel [Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT 24 May]	5
Closure of al-Najah Said Due to Hamas, PLO Tensions [Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ 4 Jun]	7

IRAQ

Azerbaijani Official Reportedly Praises Saddam [BABIL 29 Apr]	8
---	---

LIBYA

Saudi Charge d'Affaires Receives Letter for King Fahd [JANA]	8
--	---

SAUDI ARABIA

Author Relates Democracy to New Laws, Government [AL-JAZIRAH 18 Apr]	8
SABIC Reports 1991 Accomplishments [AL-JAZIRAH 20 Apr]	10
Jizan Agricultural Project Seen as Watershed [AL-MADINAH 25 Apr]	11
Railroad Manager Discusses Achievements, Plans [AL-MADINAH 18 Apr]	14

SUDAN

Lam Akol on People, Prospects for Peace [AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH 17 Apr]	15
Al-Turabi Discusses Islamic Movement [AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH 8 Apr]	20
Numayri's Coup Intentions Questioned [London AL-HAYAH 6 May]	24
More Confiscation of Opposition Property [Cairo AL-WAFD 30 Apr]	25
Director Explains Zakat Budget, Disbursement [AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH Apr 5]	26
Local Grain Said Bartered for Libyan Arms [Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE 26 May]	27

TUNISIA

Foreign Minister Briefs Ben Ali on Nonaligned Meeting [Tunis Radio]	28
Foreign Minister Meets Russian Commodities Market Heads [Tunis Radio]	28
Karoui Rejects Mixing Political, Association Activity [Tunis Radio]	28
Appeal for ICO Talks on Bosnia-Herzegovina [Tunis Radio]	29
Interior Ministry To Establish Human Rights 'Cell' [Tunis Radio]	29
Government Raises Minimum Wage in Agriculture, Industry [Tunis Radio]	29

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Editorial on Territorial Disputes, Saddam [AL-KHALIJ 19 Apr]	30
Agricultural Ministry Details Completed Dams [AL-KHALIJ 19 Apr]	30

WESTERN SAHARA

- Polisario Chief in Paris for Talks [Paris LE MONDE 20 May] 31

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

- Labor Minister Interviewed on 1992 Plan [AL-JUMHURIYAH 1 May] 32

SOUTH ASIA

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

- Analyst Sees Possible Division of Afghanistan [New Delhi JANSATTA 20 Apr] 36
Ethnic Indian Merchants Said Facing Attacks, Expulsion [New Delhi JANSATTA 14 May] 37

BANGLADESH

- New Indian Envoy Presents Credentials [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 30 Apr] 38
Ministry Issues Statement on Communal Relations
[THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 26 Apr] 39
Paper Reports Visit of Pakistan Army Chief 39
 18 Apr Activities [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 19 Apr] 39
 Call on Biswas, Jessore Visit [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 21 Apr] 39
 Call on Prime Minister [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 23 Apr] 40
 23 Apr Departure [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 23 Apr] 40
Bangladesh Aid Consortium Meets in Paris 40
 22 Apr Meeting, Pledge [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 23 Apr] 40
 More Details on Meeting [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 23 Apr] 42
IDA Loan Agreement Signed at World Bank [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 29 Apr] 43
Democratic League Central Committee Meets [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 25 Apr] 43
Jatiya Leaders Demand Fresh Elections [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 25 Apr] 44

SRI LANKA

- Wijayapala Says Government Aims at Raising Standards [DAILY NEWS 2 May] 44
DAILY NEWS Criticizes Indian Foreign Policy [DAILY NEWS 19 May] 44
Tea Export Improvement, Opportunities Viewed [DAILY NEWS 2 May] 45

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Libya Reportedly Threatens To Withdraw From UMA

92AF0877A Casablanca AL BAYANE in French
16 May 92 p 1

[Unattributed article: "Maghreb Countries Continue To Apply the UN Embargo; Libya Threatens To Split UMA"; first paragraph is AL BAYANE introduction]

[Text] The Algerian president, Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf, indicated that Libya has threatened to withdraw from the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) "if member countries do not side with al-Qadhafi (Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi) to break the embargo against Libya."

In an interview published on Friday by the Tunisian daily LA PRESSE, the Algerian president, estimated that the UMA (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Libya, and Tunisia) "might split," as a result of the embargo.

Mr. Boudiaf indicated that at a meeting with a Libyan official, Mr. Khouildi Hamidi (a member of the Revolution Command), he had told him: "Whatever we can do for you (Libya), we shall do, out of solidarity, whether or not you are a UMA member (...). We agree that you are faced with a will to crush you, but what can we do about it?"

The Algerian president also said that he had explained to that official that the other UMA countries "cannot violate the air embargo" without incurring "genuine risks" as a result.

In this connection, he noted that Syria had hinted at first that it would refuse to comply with the air embargo decreed by the UN Security Council against Libya on 15 April, but Damascus did nothing of the sort. "Soon, Syria was claiming that Greece had forbidden it to use its air space" on the way to Libya, he pointed out.

"Let's be serious. We have no right not to take into account the power struggles that go on in the world," the Algerian president emphasized in this respect.

Although they deplore the international air and military embargo imposed against Libya since 15 April, the four Maghreb countries that are Libya's partners in the UMA have complied with it.

Washington Rejected Libyan Good-Will Statements

In addition, Washington once again accused Tripoli of supporting terrorism and, on Thursday, it asked for material proofs of its determination to renounce it.

The State Department's spokeswoman, Margaret Tutwiler, commented on the announcement made by the official Libyan press agency, that Col. Muammar al-Qadhafi's government had broken its ties to international terrorism.

"On the contrary," Mrs. Tutwiler stated, "we have evidence that Libya continues to shelter several terrorist groups, and that Abu Nidal's organization has its headquarters and training camps there."

Abu Nidal's group, the Fatah Revolutionary Council (Fatah-CR) was based in Syria and left it a few years ago, when Damascus was attempting a rapprochement with the West; later on, it settled in Iraq.

Algeria Rejects Seminar Supporting Libya

NC0106155892 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 26 May 92
p 8

[Text] AL-SAFIR has learned from Arab diplomatic sources in Paris that the Algerian Foreign Ministry has turned down a request from the Lawyers Association in Algiers to approve organizing an international seminar in solidarity with the Libyan Jamahiriyah. The Lawyers Association earlier invited lawyers from the Arab countries and human rights organizations and European lawyers to participate in the international seminar to discuss UN Security Council Resolutions 731 and 748 to analyze the legal implications of this issue in solidarity with the Libyan people.

The sources said that the Foreign Ministry justified its rejection by saying that the seminar would be considered hostile toward the United States and that the Algerian Government could not do anything that would disturb the Americans. The sources said that the Algerian lawyers denounced the rejection, tried to justify the action as serving Algeria, as unofficial, and as helping the United States retract from its position, because it is embarrassed after the Los Angeles events and its refusal to hand over to Britain the pilots accused of deliberately [as heard] killing British soldiers during the Gulf war. The sources said that the lawyers are trying to exert efforts to persuade Prime Minister Ahmed Ghazali to agree to holding the seminar, but he has so far refused to meet with them.

Egypt, Gulf States Finance CIS Islamic Centers

92AF0613B Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic
12 Mar 92 p 5

[Article by Sa'id Halawi and Hasan 'Abd-al-Mawjud]

[Text] Sawhaj—Minister of Awqaf [religious trusts] Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub stated that Egypt's interest, as well as that of the sisterly Arab countries, in the Russian [former Soviet] Islamic states that recently became independent knows no limits. He said that President Mubarak has directed all authorities and institutions to seek information regarding the needs of Muslims of various leanings there, and to try to make these needs available as quickly as possible. He affirmed that a sum of \$50 million has been allocated as a first stage. With this sum, Egypt and the Gulf countries will participate in establishing 10 Islamic centers in the Russian republics. Each center will include an Islamic library, a mosque, a

hospital, an office for teaching the Koran, an al-Azhar type school, and a workshop for Muslim women. He said that a delegation from al-Azhar University is currently there conducting an on-site discussion of their needs, in order to help meet these needs gradually and prioritize them.

His Eminence Shaykh Isma'il al-'Adawi said at a meeting between ulema and Islamic advocates, and the people in Sawhaj that "Spreading the word of God [da'wah] is a mission and not a job. Our task, as advocates of Islam, is to go down to the people, share their daily life with them, and strive to spread the call with wisdom, rather than with just preaching. It is also our duty to alleviate people's hardships; review the sermons we deliver from the pulpits; revise our actions in schools and clubs; and be close to the village people and people of different professions, so that people will come to the mosque and the objective of spreading the Islamic call will be achieved."

His Eminence Shaykh 'Atiyah Bin-Saqr said that "Despair should not penetrate the hearts and minds of the Muslim nation. We are called upon to make up for the deficiency in our life through serious and productive work, so that the causes of despair will vanish and prosperity and progress will be achieved. "Some of the weak-spirited people are trying to take advantage of religion's tolerance by involving the youths in politics without understanding or consideration. They also try to inculcate in them ideas that do not stem from God's religion. Some individuals may resort to violence, murder, and terror in the name of religion. The youths must be cautious and seek the sincere and moderate ulema, so that the nation will speak with one voice.

The meeting, which took place in al-'Arif Square in Sawhaj, was attended by Christian religious leaders, including Father Murqus Hakim, for the Catholics; Father (Kyrillos), for the Orthodox; Pastor Bashir Anwar, for the Anglicans; and Governor Muhammad Hasan Tantawi.

Egypt Said Preventing Sudanese From Crossing to Libya

EA2605115092 Khartoum SUNA in English 1740 GMT 25 May 92

[Text] Khartoum, 25 May (SUNA)—The Egyptian authorities have started implementation of a political decision on preventing the Sudanese nationals to cross the Egyptian border to Libya by land, reliable sources told SUNA. The sources [word indistinct] that the said Egyptian decision was put into action since May 20, adding that the Sudanese nationals who arrive in Egypt are often subjected to investigation and provisional (?detention).

According to the sources (?66) Sudanese nationals were forbidden at Marsa Matruh port from passing to the Libyan territories, and ordered to leave for Libya via aeroplane or to return to the Sudan through the river

port of Aswan. Another 50 Sudanese nationals, the majority of them were working in Libya, were also prevented at Salum port to enter Libya from the Egyptian territories, the sources said, adding that those Sudanese have left their families in Libya.

Israeli 'Aggression' in Lebanon 'Strongly' Condemned

LD2605222392 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 26 May 92

[Text] An authorized source at the Foreign Affairs Ministry has made the following statement:

The Tunisian Government is following with great concern the escalation of acts of aggression committed by Israel against Lebanon's territory and its nationals, thus violating Lebanon's sanctity and the security of its people. It also strongly condemns these continuous violations and the repeated aggressions that constitute a challenge to all the international laws and norms and are a violation of human principles.

In the face of these practices and the escalation undertaken by Israel to undermine the peace process at a time when the multilateral peace negotiations are continuing, Tunisia exhorts the international community to take all the necessary measures to force Israel to put an end to its violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and to its provocations against the states in the region and to implement UN Resolution 425, which calls for Israel's unconditional and immediate withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Tunisian Official Praises Haj Efforts

LD3105173592 Riyadh SPA in English 1932 GMT 30 May 92

[Text] Tunis, May 30, SPA—Tunisian religious affairs, Ali Chabbi, who is also head of his country's official Haj mission, has praised the efforts of the Kingdom in service of the pilgrims.

In a press statement, Chabbi said that thanks to the facilities being made by the Kingdom, the Haj has become easy and comfortable.

He cited the current expansion projects at the two holy mosques which will be completed soon as an example for the successful efforts made by the Kingdom to ensure the comfort of pilgrims.

He also noted the huge sums spent by the Kingdom on the expansion projects and said the Kingdom had spent heavily on the welfare of Muslims.

Inequities Facing Arab Investment in France Examined

92AF0857A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic
13 May 92 pp 66-67

[Article by Mustafa al-Yahawi: "Arab Investment in France: Bitter Experience and Lean Harvest; Why Have Successful Arab Projects Failed Under Mysterious Circumstances; It Is True That Arab Monies Invested in France Fell into Snare Laid for Them in Advance"]

[Text] France is not considered a western country that is attractive to foreign investment, contrary to other countries such as Britain and Switzerland. There are no clear reasons for foreign investors' refrainment from selecting France as a center for their international investment thrust, even though some investors justify this refrainment by the limited opportunities available to foreign investment in France and by the inherited French laws that give the government broad powers and central management through which the government interferes in numerous investment processes. These laws may not stipulate discrimination against foreign investors explicitly. However, they have not changed much in the past 10 years and they do not encourage the investor to choose France as a station for investing his capital. Economists in France cite as an example of this condition the limited number of international firms that have chosen Paris as their headquarters. A serious study published in France recently shows that out of 950 international firms (U.S. and Japanese in particular) that decided to settle in Europe in the 1980's, 332 firms decided to establish their official headquarters in Britain, 196 in Belgium, and only 99 firms in France.

There are many reasons for foreign firms' aversion for France. At present, the French are exerting tireless efforts to persuade international investors and firms to select France as a station for their activities. Six French cabinet ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Tourism, have been recruited to launch a large-scale international campaign to attract foreign investors to France. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the French will establish a foreign investment ministry one day.

The French are especially interested in the Arab countries, particularly in the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries.

Arab investments in France have remained very limited and the annual investments of any Arab country do not exceed \$100 million as a general average whereas a country such as Japan, Sweden, or Australia invests nearly \$2 billion annually on the average.

Lean Harvest

An observer of relations of the Arab-French financial institutions in the past 20 years and of the outcome of Arab investments in France notices that the experience

of Arab capital with France has been bitter, has nearly failed, and has produced a very lean harvest. Until the mid-1970's, Arab financial presence in France was narrow and almost confined to a number of Arab Banks from Lebanon and the Arab Maghreb that opened branches in Paris because of the presence of large Arab communities and because of the trade volume between France and a number of Arab countries.

But after the lapse of just a few years of the first oil leap (1973) and the second leap (1979), Paris was swarmed with Arab banks which rose in number from nearly 10 banks in 1972 to more than 45 banks and financial institutions in 1985. The Arab banks in France were hit by the 1989-90 catastrophe, and their number has dropped again to less than 20 banks.

With the collapse of the Arab banks, other Arab investments also collapsed and the star of some Arab businessmen who had become famous in France began to wane, as if everything said about them and attributed to them had been nothing but confused dreams. This issue, over which a great debate was stirred in France and outside it and about which the Arab and French press have written more than enough, is now being considered by the French judiciary through dozens of dossiers connected with the bankruptcy of Arab banks.

It must be acknowledged here that Arab capitalists were as wrong in choosing France as a center for their investment as they were in selecting the individuals whom they entrusted to manage their money and to watch over their investments. This is because a snare had been laid in advance for money headed for France since the mid-1970's with the purpose of manipulating and exploiting this money as much as possible without allowing it to produce any yield or benefit. The French authorities deliberately channeled Arab investments toward certain sectors because they were new sectors in which investment was considered risky, such as the recreation towns which sprang up in France in the mid-1980's, or because they were sectors which experienced recession and stagnation in the late 1970's and early 1980's, such as the real estate sector. As for the vital economic sectors, such as advanced industry, service, and luxuries, and other sectors, their doors were shut in the face of Arab financiers, most likely out of ill will and not by pure coincidence. Had Arab investors knocked on the doors of the French electronic industries, mechanical industries, clothing, perfumes, food, and distribution industries, they would have found them closed to them.

Mismanagement of the Arab investments was due to the type of Arab and French cadres which worked in the Arab Banks and investment firms. These types were not as much concerned with the success of the financial institutions in which they worked as they were with their personal success and with accumulating wealth. French financial circles were surprised when they found out that the absolute majority of the debts owed to the Arab banks which went bankrupt in Paris five years ago had been given to the poorest African and Latin American

countries to whom even the World Bank had refused to advance any loans. For example, some Arab banks in Paris were owed debts in hundreds of millions of francs by such countries as Mozambique and Angola, whereas the main objective for which the banks had been founded was to attract the financial assets of gulf citizens to France, to exploit them in real land investments, and to follow up on trade deals between France and the gulf region. So what did loans to Africa have to do with all this? Why did the people working in those banks provide loans without minimal guarantees to poor countries already indebted to the point of strangulation? Perhaps the only benefit from such loans was the high commission fees collected by middlemen for the highly risky loan transactions.

Mirapolis, Aquarius, and [Pappy]! The two biggest French banks are the Credit Leane and the National Bank of Paris. When Arab money began to flow to Europe in the mid-1970's, these two French banks tried to take as much advantage of it as possible. So they founded, with Arab Government and private banks, two joint banks in Paris, namely the Union of Arab and French Banks [UBAF], sponsored by the Credit Leone Bank, and the Arab-International Investment Bank, which was founded through cooperation between Arab banks and the National Bank of Paris. The UBAF focused on international trade and has been able to accomplish a degree of success, thus enabling it to escape the danger of bankruptcy and to continue its activity to the present time, even though it has experienced some financial difficulties because of the collapse of one of its member banks, namely Iraq's al-Rafidayn Bank. Meanwhile, we find that the Arab-International Investment Bank waded into the domain of real estate investment in France and experienced abysmal failure which caused it to go bankrupt. This bank got involved in an immense recreational real estate project called Mirapolis. This project is tantamount to a huge recreation town (the first of its kind in France) built in the Paris suburbs. Its initial cost was estimated at 300 million francs but it rose ultimately to 500 million francs. The Arab-International Investment Bank played the main role in the project by securing the financing, by contributing to it heavily, and by supervising implementation of the project and taking part in its management as of the spring of 1987 when it was inaugurated officially. This recreation town had been designed and money had been spent on it generously so it could receive a minimum of 2.5 million visitors annually in order for the investment to be profitable, as confirmed by preliminary studies and by experts' reports. But after two years, and then three years lapsed on the Mirapolis project, not a single one of its targeted objectives was accomplished. Its visitors did not exceed one half million annually (compared to the 2.5 millions mentioned in the studies) and its debts mounted. A period of three years had hardly lapsed on the project when the sums spent on it amounted to 750 million francs, compared to revenues that could barely cover the management and maintenance costs. This

caused the Mirapolis project to go bankrupt. The recreation town shut its doors and turned into "ruins" and the Arab-International Investment Bank went belly up. The National Bank of Paris tried to rescue whatever it could save. It purchased from Arab shareholders their stock in the joint bank and covered up a financial scandal which had harmed numerous Arab businessmen.

So, is it that Arab businessmen are unfortunate or is it that they are undesirable? We ask because as soon as the dossiers of the Arab banks and of their 1990 catastrophe were closed, the Arab businessmen's dossiers were opened and their troubles with the French administration and courts and with the state financial institutions, which control the money and business domain, started. Here is the case of Lotfi [Balhosein], a Tunisian businessman, who was able to build within a few years a financial and tourist empire around the Aquarius Club which he had fashioned after the Club Med, i.e., by building a number of tourist villages and hotels in the French Mediterranean and in six other countries, including Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, and Greece—villages and hotels supported by a network of tourist agencies and a private airline, namely Air Liberty. Balhosein's business grossed 2 billion francs in 1990 and the man became a symbol of successful Arab investment in France.

But then Lotfi Balhosein lost everything within a few months and was compelled to sell his club and whatever else he owned to his rival Gilbert [Triganon], a French Jew who owns the well-known Club Med, in return for getting a 3-percent ownership of this club's capital. This occurred in Paris at the end of 1990.

Nasir Sabir, another Arab businessman from Algeria, suffered a similar catastrophe in Marseille. This young man who started his commercial activity 10 years ago was able to build up in Marseille a small business empire founded on a major chainstore for the sale of ready-made clothing. The chain went under the name of [Pappy] and its markets were frequented annually by hundreds of thousands of Maghreb tourists who crossed the Mediterranean to purchase in Marseille whatever clothing, furniture, and house appliances they needed. Nasir Sabir and his stores became a well-known landmark in France. Nasir managed to set up textile and sewing factories in Algeria and in some Asian countries and ended up managing businesses valued at hundreds of millions of francs. In the summer of 1991, Sabir's empire collapsed and the ownership of his commercial stores was transferred to his foes, exactly as had happened in the case of Lotfi Balhosein.

In the same year, in which resident Arab businessmen were mentioned no more, two Arab businessmen, namely Imran Adham, a Syrian, and Yazid [Sabegh], an Algerian, encountered great difficulty in their efforts to expand their industrial activity. Adham was prohibited by French political authorities from acquiring the ownership of a French agricultural-equipment manufacturing firm that was experiencing a stifling financial

crisis. Adham offered to purchase and rescue the firm and to open Arab markets for its products.

Sabegh, who runs [Codral], a French industrial firm, tried to increase his stock ownership in [G.C.S. Duzi]—or the Electronic Signals and Equipment Company, a famous French electronic equipment firm—from 23 percent to 66 percent by purchasing company stock at the Paris Stock Exchange. In his efforts, he encountered Fina Machina, a rival Italian firm competing with him. While expecting the French financial authorities to back up Codral's offer and to thus encourage one French firm's purchase of another firm that is leading in the area of electronic equipment, he found the French Ministry of Finance permitting the Italian firm to violate the country's acquisition laws and to acquire 33 percent of C.S. Duzi. This prevented Codral from acquiring two-thirds the company stock. Sabegh has said that he had gotten the French Government's approval before he embarked on his "financial venture" in the stock exchange. But after spending 100 million francs to purchase the Electronic Signals Firm stock, the Ministry of Economy and Finance turned against him and he found himself owning a large percentage of a company which he cannot manage as he wishes because he does not own two-thirds its shares, as he had planned originally.

Between Permissible and Prohibited

The examples cited above, the Arab investment experiences in France, and the work of Arab businessmen there, including naturalized French Arab businessmen, make it evident that these businessmen's activities are restricted and watched and that there is a "red line" which they must not cross. What they are permitted to do is to invest in real estate, speculate in the stock exchange, and engage in the import and export trade. As for other activities, they are banned to them. This is because whenever they have knocked at one of the restricted-investment doors, such as the industry, banking, service, and maintenance sectors, they have found it closed to them. When three Lebanese banks failed in France in 1989 and when some circles offered to buy and rescue them, the offer made by Adham 'Imran was the best financial offer, absolutely. But he was excluded and those banks were given away to a small French financial group which purchased them at a very low price. In 1990, 'Imran applied to purchase a private French airline that had been offered for sale and that owned a major maintenance workshop. But his offer was turned down. In 1991, he was prohibited from purchasing [Noudette Juji], an agricultural-equipment manufacturing firm, when the French authorities used against him a law called the "optimal necessity" law which dates back to Napoleon Bonaparte's time and which had been used less than five or six times over a period of 200 years. But if a man like 'Imran Adham, a Syrian businessman, is treated with obvious hostility—considering that the man is, to be very frank, prohibited from exceeding the sphere of ordinary economic activity, i.e., export and import—then the circumstances

engulfing the "blows dealt against" French Arab businessmen have been very mysterious. The activities of a businessman such as Lotfi Balhosein had been expanding and flourishing until the onset of the fall of 1990 when the French press reported one morning that he had been shot in front of his home at a late hour one night and that he had been wounded in the shoulder and taken to the hospital where he spent three weeks under treatment. Two months after this anecdote and without any preludes, Lotfi Balhosein, owner of the Aquarius Club, appeared in a press conference with Gilbert Triganon, owner of the Club Med, to announce that a partnership accord had been concluded between the two firms and that the businessman from Tunisian extraction had sold his club and whatever he owned to his rival in return for a 3-percent ownership of the stock of Club Med. Thus, Lotfi Balhosein's tourism empire folded and the leaf of his projects and activities was turned over forever.

The circumstances engulfing the collapse of Nasir Sabir's commercial empire in Marseille are no less mysterious. Sabir began by acquiring one store, then another, and then a third until he ended up with 17 stores, a number of which formed the Pappy chainstore along [Belson] Street in the center of Marseille. Last year, Sabir decided to expand his commercial activity and to transfer it to Paris where he had opened a small market in the city's 18th district which has a large Arab community, which receives groups of Maghreb tourists, and where there is another popular chainstore that goes by the name of Tatty and that attracts Arab tourists the way London's Mark and Spencer chainstore does. Last summer, Nasir Sabir went to Algeria for a period of time to check on his businesses and projects there. When he returned to Marseille, he found that his stores had been sold by his brother, who had helped him manage his businesses and trade, under mysterious circumstances. Here, more than one question was raised: How did his brother manage to dispose of and sell Sabir's property, why was the sale made with such amazing speed, who was behind this commercial maneuver, and who had an interest in freeing the French business arena of chainstores that were owned and managed by an Arab businessman and that attracted tens of thousands of Maghreb tourists? Even though it is difficult to answer these questions at this time, what is certain is that the downfall of Lotfi Balhosein, followed by Nasir Sabir, and restrictions prohibiting 'Imran Adham or Yazid Sabegh from entering into the sphere of beneficial industrial investment will not encourage diversification of Arab financial investments in France or interest in more such investments.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

PLO Finance Minister on Cooperation With Israel

92AE0397A Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew
24 May 92 pp 9, 15

[Article by Gid'on Eshet, Brussels: "PLO Finance Minister: There Will Be Close Economic Cooperation Between Israel and Palestine"]

[Text] At the end of last month all the representatives of the territories to the multinational negotiations were invited to Jordan for consultations. Two days were set aside for discussions, but the representatives were away from the territories a whole week. They were not in Jordan. They were meeting in Tunis.

"We were kidnapped," said one of the representatives, smiling. The Palestinians from the territories were joined in Tunis by representatives of the diaspora in order to prepare working papers on the topics of disarmament, economy, ecology, refugees, and water.

But before they were released from PLO captivity, they had to pass a test. On the last day a simulated game was conducted. The Palestinian delegation to the negotiations on water was confronted by another Palestinian team who pretended to represent Israel. The judge was Abu-Mazan, a senior leader. At the end of the game the judge declared that the "Israeli" side had won and sent the Palestinian delegation off to do some homework: "Your arguments were not good enough."

Some of the territories representatives always behaved with a certain measure of contempt toward the leadership in Tunis. Their claim was that the PLO leadership was not professional enough. This time they were pleasantly surprised. No Palestinian delegation ever prepared for negotiations as it did in the past few weeks.

Now no one is hiding it any longer. The territories representatives to negotiations are decided by the PLO leadership. Aside from the meeting in Tunis, which was talked about by everyone, all the Palestinians stayed at the same hotel. The PLO arranged a situation room in the hotel. The head of the Palestinian delegation was Professor Yusuf Saig, but it was clear to everyone that the political boss was Ahmad Abu-'Ala', chief of the PLO economic department. The Palestinians dropped the pretense that had been staged for Israel's sake. From now on, and this is the official line, everyone will be working in the name of the PLO and the PLO will be giving the instructions.

The Palestinians' good friends at the talks on economic cooperation were the Europeans. Anyone who bothered to talk to the EEC representatives walked away with one impression: The economic relations between the EEC and Israel are under freeze.

The Palestinians said that the Europeans begged the Israeli Foreign Ministry to cancel David Levi's mission to Brussels. Levi came for talks on pending issues between the EEC and Israel. Why should Levi not have come? "Because we will turn down all his requests," the Europeans said.

Levi came, talked politics, and ignored the details of the Israeli request to expand the economic agreement with the Common Market. The EEC people told Levi what the Americans told Shamir: "We will be happy to expand the economic relations with Israel, on condition that you stop the settlements." Levi, the Europeans said, reported

only the first part of the sentence to Jerusalem. But just to avoid any misunderstanding, the director of the "EEC Foreign Ministry" summoned a few Israeli newsmen and explained to them in terms which could not be misinterpreted: "You will not get anything anymore without progress on the peace issue. The Israeli request list is in my freezer."

The man who is conducting the Palestinian economic orchestra is a PLO man, Ahmad Abu-'Ala'. Whenever he discovers an Israel journalist at a briefing he invites him to pose for a joint picture, "Just so you will go to jail for the crime of shaking my hand." He belongs to what is known as the moderate current in the PLO. His friends claim that he is the PLO's MAPAI-nik [Israel Workers Party].

[Presumably Eshet] What kind of economic relations will there be after the peace?

[Abu-'Ala'] We cannot go into the economic details of the future without a peace agreement. Shamir and his government are currently blocking any progress.

[Eshet] Let us play "pretend." What will happen during the autonomy period?

[Abu-'Ala'] From an economic viewpoint, we want to first of all govern our economy. The legislative commission that will be elected in the general elections will establish economic bodies that will operate in the future state.

[Eshet] With open or closed borders?

[Abu-'Ala'] As is the case between two friendly countries. Some areas and issues will be completely open, while others will be restricted in each of the two countries. That is natural, it exists between European countries, too. But both Israel and Palestine are small countries and it is clear to us—also in the light of the seminar held here—that cooperation between small countries is enormously useful.

[Eshet] Will an Israeli be able to invest in the autonomous territories or in the Palestinian state?

[Abu-'Ala'] Why not? Is an Israeli allowed to invest in Europe? He is. Can a Palestinian invest in the United States? He can. So why should we not invest in each other's country? Remember, however, that we are talking about a time after peace has been achieved.

[Eshet] In Israel, Palestinian peace is viewed as a flexible concept.

[Abu-'Ala'] The peace between us Palestinians and Israelis will be like a catholic marriage—no divorce.

Eberhard Rein is in charge of the Mediterranean area in the EEC. The Israelis who are in contact with the EEC view Rein as "anti-Israeli." Rein does not hide his reservations about the loan that the EEC approved for Israel after the Gulf War. He would have liked the EEC

to make the loan conditional on stopping the settlements. That, however, does not prevent Rein from knocking down the Palestinians' hope for an independent state and a separate economic entity. "You are crazy," he told our cousins across the Green Line, "if you consider closing the economic border between yourselves and Israel. You are almost zero economically and only open links with Israel can improve your situation. My professional advice to you is; Do not cut yourselves off, or you will sentence yourselves to poverty."

One of the representatives of the diaspora, Zayin Miasi, visited Israel about one year ago. Miasi belongs to the kind of people with whom Israel does not allow herself to negotiate. Miasi is a native of Haifa who now lives in London. He wears very English three-piece suits and is very close to Yasir 'Arafat. What was Miasi doing in Israel?

[Miasi] I received permission and I came on a home visit. I traveled from one end of the country to the other with a lot of nostalgia and not much purpose.

However, one Palestinian who heard his report to the PLO said that it was not like that at all. Miasi had been invited by Defense Minister Moshe Arens. As soon as he arrived at the airport he was driven to the Defense Ministry for lengthy talks with Arens and his aides. "And those discussions had immediate results," the Palestinian source stressed with satisfaction. "After that Arens and Professor Ezra Sadan—Arens' advisor for economic affairs in the territories—initiated a string of steps designed to lower taxes and encourage investment."

[Presumably Eshet] Although you are the diaspora representative to the economic talks, you are said to have friends in Israel.

[Miasi] I have one good friend, his name is Yonatan Qolber. A few days ago we met in London and I even met his fiancée. When I was in Israel Qolber brought me together with the top of the Israeli business community. I was happy to discover that most of them hold dovish views, which is only natural. Businessmen want peace and quiet. That is good for successful business.

Miasi is the kind of person whom Shim'on Peres would love. Like him, Miasi talks about the vision of economic cooperation among all the Middle Eastern countries.

[Eshet] What will happen the day after peace?

[Miasi] I am one of the first to view the reality as a cinemascopie movie, rather than a regular movie. Both you and the PLO members have a narrow outlook of the reality. I see things on a large scale. I am not built for small business. Israel and Palestine are small items. Our economic future must be intertwined with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

[Eshet] What kind of economic relations will there be when there is peace?

[Miasi] I am talking of an economically open zone and of free circulation of capital, people, and goods. There is no need for economic separation, just as there is no economic separation between Belgium and France. But do not forget, all that will come after the peace under which Palestinian independence will be achieved.

[Eshet] Many people in Israel interpret "independence" in the territories as the first step toward Israel's annihilation.

[Miasi] You really do exaggerate. What are you interested in, our independence, or your security? All you have to do is ensure the security arrangements capable of setting your minds at rest. Say what arrangements you want, and do not argue about our independence. Anyone who denies us our independence weakens his own right to independence.

[Eshet] We want you to have no army.

[Miasi] I personally am willing that the Palestinian state should have no army. Moreover, I am altogether against an army in our country. Why? Look at the armies in the Arab countries.

[Eshet] You personally, or you as the PLO?

[Miasi] I take full responsibility when I say this. Make a proposal for an independent Palestinian state without an army. You would be surprised by the reply.

Closure of al-Najah Said Due to Hamas, PLO Tensions

TA0506085992 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
4 Jun 92 p 2

[Text] The decision of the Israeli Administration to close al-Najah University in Nablus for seven days was due to the severe tensions between the national organizations, i.e., the PLO and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. This is the first closure order issued to a university in the territories since the opening of all Arab institutions of higher education, which had been closed for about three years during the peak of the intifadah.

Approximately 4,000 students, mostly from the Samaria region, study at al-Najah University. Last week they were supposed to hold elections for the student council. The preparations for elections were accompanied by acts of violence, and under the pressure of the board of the university, who had been warned by the Civil Administration, it was decided to postpone the elections.

The Islamic groups in the university took advantage of the delay, and declared last week the opening of a festival of Islamic culture. The festival was supposed to include a whole range of activities, among them exhibitions, conferences, and lectures.

The students belonging to the national organizations, and the school board were greatly irritated by the holding

of the festival, and they attempted to prevent the observance of the festival. Appeals to halt the peace process and a return to armed struggle with Israel were included in the framework of the festival. At the demand of the Islamic fundamentalists expressions denying Israel the right to exist were also included.

Since the opening of al-Najah, no security problems have been recorded, and the studies in the rest of the educational institutions in the territories this year have been conducted, more or less, as usual.

IRAQ

Azerbaijani Official Reportedly Praises Saddam

92P40196A

[Editorial Report] The Baghdad daily Arabic-language newspaper BABIL published an article on 29 April 1992 attributed to Dzhemshid Kurban Ogly, described as a member of the Azerbaijan parliament and deputy customs minister. A prologue signed "the editor" claims that the article was first published in the AZERBAIJAN newspaper of 31 January 1991. BABIL describes the author as a person with "a just voice, who has taken a bold stand on the side of truth." The article provides historical background on Saddam's position and activities in the Ba'th Party to "raise morale and heal wounds" until he came to power. The article characterizes Saddam's ascension to power as the fulfillment of his "lesser struggle" and the beginning of his "greater struggle" for the application of the party's liberating ideology to society.

The article goes on to say that, in interpreting the history and development of the Arab nation, Saddam rejected both the "Salafiyah" school of thought, which only considers the spiritual evolution of nations, and the "Marxist" school of thought, which only considers the material evolution, and quotes him as saying that, "The history of the Arab nation extends to ancient times" and that "the appearance of Islam among the Arabs, although great, did not take place in a passive Arab nation, but in a living and revolutionary nation." Saddam is quoted to have said that "our party is not neutral between religion and atheism, but is on the side of religion," a religion which is free from politics. This means, the article continues, that government should be above ethnic and religious divisions, that all citizens are equal, and that these citizens may choose whatever religion they wish.

On the wealth brought about by the discovery of oil in Arab lands, the article states that such wealth "is not equitably distributed" among the members of the Arab nation but mostly goes to the "ruling families" in the Arab lands. For example, "the income of a Kuwaiti is 150 times more than the income of a Somali." Furthermore, most of the Arab wealth in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait goes to the West, benefitting not the people in the region but the industrial countries, especially the United States. The

author writes that because Saddam rose up against this state of affairs, "the ideas of Saddam gained great importance, not only in Iraq, but also among the Arab nation as a whole."

The author asserts that the Ba'th Party established an all-embracing democracy in Iraq and ended despotic rule in that country, and that Saddam created a new structure for democracy, gave "the Kurdish nation their complete rights" within a united Iraqi nation, and brought about a series of laws to ensure cultural rights for all ethnic groups in Iraq.

The domestic and foreign policies of the new Iraq after what is called "the 1968 revolution" are described in the article to be derived from a process which involves the nation in the "debate, study, and review" of those policies which form the foundation of government, and that government by the Ba'th Party is based on principles which "involve all the political forces in one united front." These principles are outlined as: "struggle against imperialism; non-interference in the affairs of other nations; friendly relations with all countries; elimination of foreign rule on Arab land and rejection of military alliances with foreign powers; and alliance with the revolutionary forces worldwide against colonialism and Zionism."

LIBYA

Saudi Charge d'Affaires Receives Letter for King Fahd

LD3105212292 Tripoli JANA in English 0811 GMT
31 May 92

[Text] Tripoli, al-Ma' [May] 31, JAMAHIRYAH NEWS AGENCY—The secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation last night met with the Saudi Charge d'Affaires to the Great Jamahiriyah Muhammed Hasan Banda [as received].

The secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation delivered, during this meeting, a letter to the Saudi charge d'affaires from the leader of the revolution to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

SAUDI ARABIA

Author Relates Democracy to New Laws, Government

92AE0376A Riyadh AL-JAZIRAH in Arabic 18 Apr 92
p 11

[Article by Dr. Fu'ad 'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi: "Democracy, Good Government"]

[Text] During the first half of the seventies, I went to the United States to resume my education at the graduate

level, having studied politics and law as an undergraduate. After finishing study of the English language in preparation for writing a master's thesis, I began to perceive that American academics, particularly political scientists and jurists, regard their presidential system as the world's best system of government and the model to be applied universally to other countries.

I must indeed confess that the American system immediately attracted my attention and raised my interest at the time. It even induced me to take the subject of American governments as my area of academic specialization for a second master's thesis. While at work on the thesis, I studied the subject in its three levels: local, state, and federal. I also studied American history and political thought.

In 1975, a seminar was taught to doctoral students. I enrolled in the course with a group of students of various nationalities: American, Saudi, Nigerian, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Latin American. Although nearly 20 years have passed since the episode, I still remember it as if it had happened but a short while ago. That is because one of our professors raised a provocative issue that we discussed for several successive weeks: the conceptual democracy that is suitable to be a model applied in all countries.

I remember that all students in the group, except two, showed great enthusiasm for the idea. The two were a Nigerian student named Yumi Durutwi and I. We both agreed that the dictionary meaning of the term democracy forms no guarantee in reality that the meaning intended by repeating this term (providing political, social, and economic justice, for example) will be realized, especially under contemporary conditions. As the most suitable definition, the one most at harmony with meaning intended by democracy, we arrived at "good government."

In the course of several sessions that witnessed serious, committed discussion on the subject, and through my proposing a hypothetical question and then answering it myself, I was able to clarify to the group the nature of "good government," as follows:

Question: What are the basic characteristics of the good government? Is it the one that gives its subjects complete freedom in a capitalist economy and freedom of movement in transferring capital, etc.?

Answer: 1) It is the one that provides citizens with the fundamentals and pressing necessities of life, such as education, health, social security, jobs, and so forth, abundantly and easily, without bias or discrimination between citizens.

2) It is the one that allows the individual to realize his utmost legitimate aspirations within the context of the law, the canons of public interest, respect for observed values, and the rights of others.

3) It is the one that strives to provide its citizens the greatest degree of security and prosperity and constant development and growth of the country.

4) It is the one that strives in its international relations to provide security and preserve stability and international peace.

5) It is the one that strives for the stability of the international financial and economic system through economic thinking based on the principle of mutual dependence.

6) It is the one that understands its international responsibilities, contributes actively and effectively to the growth and development of countries that do not have the needed means, and provides unconditional foreign aid.

7) It is the one that senses its humanitarian responsibilities and international obligations to extend the hand of assistance to whoever needs it and works to alleviate human suffering when disasters and crises occur.

8) It is the one that stands on the side of the oppressed, helps those who have just causes, like the Palestinians and others, and contributes to the success of efforts such as the north-south dialogue to realize international stability in order to reach a better international community.

9) It is the one that strives to resolve regional and international problems through civilized dialogue that can solve problems and conflicts peacefully, without recourse to violence, agitation, provocation, illegal seizure of others' land, or violation of their rights.

10) It is the one that shows concern for the affairs of its citizens, dedicates its energy to providing them the means of a dignified life, and motivates them to seek a living, while guaranteeing legitimate means of subsistence.

11) It is the one that deals with its domestic problems and the affairs of its subjects on the basis of established rules of law that do not change or alter from day to day and that are not violated by exceptional or bureaucratic adjustments depending on changing circumstances or personalities.

12) It is the one that respects human rights among its citizens and among others, based on its faith in God's words, "Indeed We have honored the children of Adam" [Koran 17:70].

We kept discussing this subject, and we studied and analyzed each of its parts in detail. After more than three months, we reached the shared conviction that the good government is one that has all the aforementioned characteristics. Such a government is fit to be a model followed in all countries of the world and is rightly synonymous with the term democracy used in the Western political and communications lexicon on a wide scale, although in many cases it carries only its literal significance, abstracted from its objective content.

When we recall this subject to mind today, it is only to affirm that history is a connected fabric. Today did not come out of a vacuum; it is the child of yesterday, though it may seem different. It has recently become apparent that there are many who are concerned about the political system in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is because of the three laws recently issued: the Basic Law of Governance, the Law of Districts and Provinces, and the Consultative Council Law.

Such interest certainly makes us happy. It makes us feel pride, especially if its motive is good faith and honest love. For we regard these laws as a bright spot in our history and a prominent landmark on the road of the political development of the third Saudi state. It should be said that the essential principles on which these laws are based are about the same as those on which Western laws are based. Perhaps the most prominent of these principles is that of separation between the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities, as well as independence of the judiciary.

My interest in clarifying the resemblances between the essential principles of Western laws and those on which the Saudi laws are based is not an attempt to compare the two. What the Western countries (parliamentary or presidential) implement in their plans and policies is indeed present in the Saudi form of government that has existed since the official proclamation of the monarchy in 1932.

It is present, however, in a different form. The reason for the difference is that the Saudi system draws its precepts from Islamic law. It relies for its fundamental sources on the Koran and the Sunnah, sources not known to many in the Western world. What we want to clarify here is that the end result is the same in both cases.

Although I do not want to undertake a comparison or weighing of the two systems, I will merely indicate here that I am no opponent of the Western political systems or even of the regimes that imitate them in our Arab-Islamic world. The reason is simple and clear: only the people of those countries are affected by these regimes; as long as they sanction them for themselves, no one afterward has the right to impose on them his personal view, even if this view seems logical.

To confirm our thesis that the new Saudi laws are based on the same principles as the systems ordinarily called democratic, we shall review here the most important principles contained in those systems, setting beside them the corresponding provisions in the Saudi laws.

- 1) Human rights: Basic Law of Governance, section 26.
- 2) Economic freedom: Basic Law of Governance, sections 18, 19.
- 3) Freedom of movement: Basic Law of Governance, section 36.
- 4) Provision of fundamentals of life: Basic Law of Governance, sections 27, 28, 30, 31, 32.

5) Freedom of thought and expression: Basic Law of Governance, section 39.

6) Security and stability: Basic Law of Governance, section 33, 38.

7) Establishment of basic structure: Basic Law of Governance, section 22.

The conclusion I wish to reach here is that the West must view us and our political system not merely from its own angle of vision, but also through our Islamic system that flows from the teachings of our religion and harmonizes with our customs, our traditions, and our cultural, social, and human heritage.

Furthermore, what suits one country may not necessarily suit another country. For example, we find that the Western systems focus attention on satisfying the personal desires of the individual; they seek all means to satisfy the individual, regardless of any other considerations. The Islamic system, on the other hand, seeks the welfare of the individual in the context of the cohesive family and a healthy, interconnected community. This is certainly a major difference between Western systems and the Islamic system. Lately, many Western thinkers have noted and acknowledged it.

As for methods of forming governments through a multiparty system and direct or indirect elections, no one can deny that these methods are frequently fraught with wide-scale abuses in many countries that employ them under a scarcely appropriate slogan of democracy.

Again, I want to make it clear that by what I have said here I do not wish to belittle the views of others or disparage systems of government accepted by their people. I merely wanted to stress that we too are content and fully satisfied with our system. Others must respect our will, as we respect theirs.

Success comes from God alone!

SABIC Reports 1991 Accomplishments

92AE0386A Riyadh AL-JAZIRAH in Arabic 20 Apr 92
p 5

[Article: SABIC To Distribute 1 Billion Riyals in Shareholder Dividends"]

[Text] His Excellency Eng. 'Abd-al-'Aziz ['Abdallah] al-Zamil, minister of industry and electricity and chairman of SABIC's [Saudi Basic Industries Corporation] board of directors, chaired SABIC's general assembly meeting held at its Riyadh headquarters the evening before last.

The assembly ratified all items on the agenda, including the distribution of 1 billion [Saudi] riyals in shareholder cash dividends at the rate of 10 riyals per share. Of that amount, the state's share is 700 million riyals. The remaining 300 million riyals will go to shareholders among the citizens of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf

Cooperation Council [GCC] states. Undistributed profits will accrue to general reserves.

The assembly also approved the board of directors' report, the auditors' report, and the profit and loss statement for the fiscal year ending 21 December 1992. [as published] The assembly also approved the nomination of two board members from the private sector members to serve for three-year terms beginning this year and ending in 1994. [Elected] were Muhammad Sulayman [Abanmi] and 'Abdallah Muhammad al-'Isa.

The meeting came to order after a Koran recitation and was opened by his excellency the minister of industry and electricity and chairman of SABIC's board of directors. He thanked those in attendance for their continued responsiveness to SABIC and their involvement with it.

He said that SABIC made great accomplishments in 1991 in production, marketing, technology, and development. It also initiated several expansion programs for more productive capacity that would further bolster SABIC's position among world producers and exporters.

He mentioned SABIC's role in developing the manufacturing industries sector in order to enhance the industrial sector's contribution to GDP.

He was followed by Ibrahim Bin-'Abdallah Bin-Salmah, deputy chairman and chief executive officer, who gave the board's report, which highlighted SABIC's productivity, marketing efforts, and its net profits.

He pointed out that SABIC, which has marketed some 10.114 million metric tons of product, has doubled its efforts to affirm its international presence and has strengthened its presence in major world markets.

He added that the company continued to meet the demands of domestic markets and has augmented services to national sectors that consume its products.

He mentioned that SABIC's realized net profits of 2.295 billion riyals in 1991 were lower than in the preceding year, because of the world economic slump in general, and its impact on world petrochemical markets in particular. Prices of many products softened as a result of the recession and caused a slide in the profits of world petrochemical industries in general. He also attributed lower profits to the Gulf crisis and its impact on the region, resulting in considerable increases in shipping and insurance costs, and in lower output rates for certain products.

He added that SABIC reinforced its national distribution network in 1991 by opening more offices, branches, depots, and service centers. It also doubled its efforts to create a national workforce capable of handling marketing operations. He explained that SABIC marketed 4.2352 million metric tons of products in 1991, of which 2.8144 metric tons were marketed directly through SAFCO, its iron [affiliate]. The remainder was marketed through the facilities of its international partners.

Ibrahim Bin-Salmah mentioned that SABIC's most heralded marketing accomplishment in 1991 was the creation of the Saudi Arabian Company for Fertilizer Marketing, which is to take over marketing chores for the fertilizers that SABIC produces at home and abroad.

He mentioned that two expansion programs were initiated in 1991. The first was at the Ibn-Hayyan complex to add annual production capacity of 100,000 tons of [poly]vinyl chloride [PVC] and the other at al-Razi complex for an additional capacity of 600,000 tons of methanol per year. He pointed out that other projects are on schedule and will be adding further new capacity between now and 1993.

He added that [Saudi] nationals accounted for more than 62 percent of SABIC's 9,609 employees by the end of 1991 and that all SABIC's leadership and senior positions are now deftly and competently filled by native personnel qualified through SABIC's training programs and projects.

Ibn-Salmah pointed out that SABIC's Industrial Complex for Research and Development is considered a future nucleus to develop domestic technologies that would serve the industrial sector and lessen dependence on foreign technologies. The complex also serves to constantly improve the quality of SABIC products and introduce products and grades demanded by domestic and world consumers. The facility is also engaged in developing industrial techniques and applications that would enhance SABIC's standing in domestic and world markets.

The assembly concluded by approving the distribution of dividends as of 17 May 1992.

Jizan Agricultural Project Seen as Watershed

92AE037°C Jeddah AL-MADINAH in Arabic 25 Apr 92
p 12

[Article by Ibrahim Muhammad Niyazi, Jizan]

[Text] Agriculture is considered one of the chief sectors upon which, after God, the kingdom's economic and social development plans rely. Food security is the cornerstone of those plans, which aim to raise the quality of projects and point them towards increased production in order to end the import of foods.

The kingdom has, in a brief period of time, made giant leaps and urgent steps towards agricultural expansion and encouraging farmers, which has put them on par with countries exporting wheat, dates, and other agricultural products.

Studies have shown that most parts of the kingdom are arable land, with excellent soil. There are agricultural possibilities in Wadi Jizan as an experimental area for irrigated agricultural development.

The Tihamah region is, by and large, a coastal plain extending 200 km along the Red Sea coast, and is about

30 km wide. Wadi Jizan is considered one of the most important wadis in the southern Tihamah, with a length of 31 km and a width of 15 km. Its area is approximately 43,000 hectares, and its major axis extends from the northeast to the southeast, and it is bounded on the north by Wadi Damad, on the east by the 'Asir Mountains, on the south by Wadi Majah and on the west by sand dunes. The area of the agricultural development project is in the lower level of the wadi, less than 200 m above sea level, with an average rainfall of 210 mm, and an arable land area of 7,000 hectares. The number of floods into the wadi fluctuates between 15-35 per year, with a volume estimated at 5-10 m³ per flooding. The soil in the region is light and fertile, with a high alluvial mud content borne by the floods. The wadi's climate is mild, with moderate winters and hot summers. Temperatures reach a low of 21[°] C between November and February, which is the principal period for crops and vegetables in Jizan.

Beginnings

The manager of the agricultural development project in Jizan, Engineer 'Awad Tahir Salam, said that, "In view of the abundant factors for successful farming in Jizan—suitable soil, plentiful water and weather conditions conducive to farming, and many varieties of vegetables, crops, and fruits, options are wide open. Experiments began with vegetables, because they are temporary and can be pulled out of the ground after their season, as with tomatoes, cucumbers, various types of peppers, eggplant, onions, okra, watermelons, zucchini, and cantaloupes; and leafy greens such as watercress, Jew's mallow, and radishes. The aim of that was to discover the best varieties in terms of yield, disease resistance, planting seasons, and water needs.

"While conducting these experiments on vegetables, there were other experiments on crops such as cotton, sunflowers, yellow corn, Indian corn, peanuts, sesame, sugar beets, and experiments on feeds such as Hijazi clover [*medicago sativa*], al-Hasa clover, (?claturia), and (?dajir)."

The project manager confirmed that the outcome of the experiments were successful, thanks be to God, giving excellent results in terms of harvest quantity, and proved that it far exceeded the world average. He pointed out that "The project began at another stage, utilizing the land for trees, to introduce types of tropical and semi-tropical fruits, due to the similarity of Jizan's weather conditions to those of tropical regions. So mango, papaya, pineapple, guava, and fig trees were put in, with dazzling, better than excellent results in terms of rich harvest, quality of volume, flavor, and nutritional qualities. All this made the fruit unique in the market, unrivaled by any variety imported from abroad."

Project Services in Agricultural Guidance

The project offers major services to farmers throughout the Tihamah region, such as soil study and lab analysis,

then planning a garden according to modern methods of growing fruits and planting wind breaks such as (?nim), almond, and camphor, and acacia trees, which can withstand the dryness and heat, to keep the wind and dust from the fruit trees.

The project's agricultural engineer, 'Ali Ahmad Zanun, explained that there is a team that makes tours and visits to the farms, with an average of 150 visits per month. The team is made up of an agricultural engineer, two agricultural technicians, and a driver.

The region has been divided into three parts, the first from al-Zabiyah to al-Darb, the second from al-(Zabyah) to the Wadi Jizan dam, and the third from the dam to one of the pastures and Samitah.

He confirmed that these tours had a positive effect on farmers, who had begun to cultivate fruit, which boded well, particularly in the past two years. Farmers have begun to market their farm produce to the mango, guava, and fig markets.

Eng. Zanun explained that "A complete report is kept on every farm to supply it with the seedlings it needs, according to its scientifically estimated area, and the farms are tracked for vaccination, fertilization, pruning, and the irrigation method until production begins."

The agricultural engineer in the project's garden section, 'Abduh Sulayman Bin-Qasim, confirms that the cultivation of fruits, especially mangoes, pineapples, figs, guavas, and papayas, has become widespread in Jizan, and has achieved, praise God, astonishing success through the distribution of seedlings by the Wadi Jizan Project.

He attributed that to the fact that, after seeing the fruit trees in the Project's fields, and the organizing of information days or "Field Week", to which the farmers were invited, the farmers saw the trees' ample produce and were convinced.

The engineer in charge of the harvest section, Muhammad Bin-Sa'd al-Yami, explained that his section's activities were research-oriented in the beginning, for seven years, from 1972. The results of the research were promising, with God's will.

He added that "We found that harvest yield for corn was four to five tons per hectare, which was what it is in the rest of the world. And peanuts, or 'field nut' production reached six tons per hectare. Experiments there had proven that the general average of most varieties which had undergone agricultural experimentation were 27 tons of roots per hectare, while the global average is 35 tons per hectare."

He indicated that there is an intention to expand in the cultivation of new crops. This is now under detailed study, & that future steps, God willing, will be more comprehensive and beneficial.

Project Achievements

Speaking of the project's achievements, Eng. 'Awad Salam explained that, praise God, more than 386,000 seedlings of fruit, ornamental plant, and wind break [trees] had been produced, as well as five tons of Indian corn, 20 tons of peanuts, and five tons of (?claturia).

Project engineers have fenced off sick citrus trees, estimated at more than 100,000 in 43 farms, while continuing to offer technical advice to farmers, becoming familiar with their problems, and isolating and identifying agricultural pests and all the region's prevalent plants. These are just a few of the project's achievements.

On the ample water sources in Wadi Jizan, the manager of the Agricultural Development Project in Wadi Jizan explained that study of the wadi's surface water and average rainfall had shown that the average [annual] water [supply] was 66 million m³, that the lowest annual drainage was 20 million m³, and the highest 120 million m³. The project carried out a statistical field study of 4,000 wells, both for irrigation and drinking, in Jizan Province, of which 700 were in Wadi Jizan, with depths ranging from 50-80 meters.

Eng. Salam explained that the project was now completing a detailed study of Wadi Jizan's groundwater through geophysical research, interpreting satellite photos, and remote sensing. When the study is complete, they will be able to have an approximate figure for the water availability and its uses, depending, after God, on purely practical results.

He added that the project had made a feasibility study for developing modern irrigation by using surface water and groundwater to develop agriculture for an area of 10,000 hectares in the wadi. The study showed that possibly the best use for the available water resources was to increase the area under cultivation and to vary those crops that rely upon constant irrigation. Irrigation in the wadi is usually in four local seasons: "shabb," autumn [kharif], "mukhrif," and "sa'udat."

Farmers' Benefit From Project; Effect on Agriculture

Speaking of the benefit of the project's services and the revival of agricultural activity, a large number of farmers in Jizan Province expressed their satisfaction with the services offered to them. An old man of the Baysh area, Jabir Bin-'Akafi, said, "I introduced new fruit cultivation into my farm, after producing only corn, and by God's grace, and thanks also to the support and concern of the state, I got excellent results. Orange, mango, banana, and lemon production were a success."

Farmer 'Abdallah Bin-Ahmad Abu-'Amiriyah praised the government of Custodian of the Two Holy Places, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, may God keep him, for his support and concern for farmers. He said that he had benefited completely from agricultural loans offered by the Agricultural Bank. Now he has a large farm with all varieties of fruits and vegetables. He also emphasized the

role of the Wadi Jizan Agricultural Development Project, and the support, advice, seedlings, and other [benefits] it had provided to him and other farmers.

'Ali Bin-Salih Hamla enumerated his benefits from the Agricultural Bank, and said that he had obtained 16 horsepower pump and dug a well to supply his farm, and a tractor.

Farmer Husayn Ahmad Zayn-al-Din, 65, spoke of the difference between farming, past and present, saying, "In the past, farmers suffered hardship to get a corn harvest, which was not enough to keep them alive, water was scarce, and there was little expertise. Today, praise God, farmers are in their golden age, as a result of the constant support and attention in these flourishing times."

Taking himself as an example, he said, "I plant sesame on my farm. You came today, and I'm bringing in the harvest, praise God. Sesame growing takes three months, then we pick the plants and dry them in the sun for 24 days. They are beaten by hand so that the seeds come off."

He added that, in some seasons, he gets eight sacks of sesame, and markets his produce, selling one sack for 500 riyals.

Project Efforts

Statistics published by the Guidance and Training Section confirmed that more than 3,000 trainees—engineers and agricultural technicians from both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Bank, from various parts of the kingdom, as well as farm technicians and owners—have benefited from the specialized training courses organized by the Wadi Jizan Project.

The project currently oversees 61 guidance farms, divided into three regions, in addition to offering guidance services to 330 farms. Five hundred water samples from 459 wells were analyzed, and the soil of 514 farms was analyzed. On the agricultural future of the region, project manager Eng. 'Awad Tahir Salam confirmed that the future, God willing, would be brilliant and full of many blessings. He said, "The Agricultural Development Company in Jizan began its work and will have an efficacious effect on stimulating agricultural activity, and the return of farmers to exploiting their land properly, thus effectively encouraging vegetable and fruit production. God willing, self-sufficiency in vegetables and fruits is not far off, and will be followed by an export phase. The kingdom's name, God willing, will be distinguished, as it always is in everything."

And so on. What is spoken of [here] is only a small part of the aspirations that we have seen in the Agricultural Development Project in Jizan. The seedlings and fruit bushes embrace, as if announcing to all who see them, that the strivings of our country are unlimited, and that this essential model of agriculture, with its broad expanses and abundant yield, is the true translation of the efforts of the government of the Custodian of the

Two Holy Places, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and his faithful Crown Prince, and a precious badge every citizen of our country is proud of: we are moving towards a more shining future.

Railroad Manager Discusses Achievements, Plans

92AE0375A Jeddah AL-MADINAH in Arabic 18 Apr 92 p 11

[Interview with Public Railroads Chief Faysal al-Shuhayl by Khalid Ba-Hakam in Medina, date not given]

[Text] His Excellency Professor Faysal Bin-Muhammad al-Shuhayl, General Manager of the Public Railroad Organization [PRO], has confirmed that more than 3 billion Saudi riyals have been spent on the organization's projects over 10 years. He said that there were three studies for linking all the kingdom's provinces with a network of rail lines, and stressed that the implementation of these projects showed the appropriate importance of railways. He discussed, in his AL-MADINAH interview, the efforts to train workers and Saudi-ize the staff, and the economic feasibility of existing railway routes and future projects. The interview follows:

[Ba-Hakam] What is the scale of achievement realized by the Public Railroad Organization?

[Al-Shuhayl] He said, of the achievements realized by the railways in past years, that PRO had realized, in 1400-1410 Hijrah [1980-1990] huge projects worth more than 3 billion riyals, most importantly the Riyadh dry port project; the building of a direct 310-km al-Hufuf/Riyadh line; renewing the old Dammam/Hufuf/Harad/al-Kharj/Riyadh; double-gauging the 140-km Dammam/Hufuf railway; building three modern stations in Riyadh, Dammam, and Hufuf; and building a large maintenance center for train repair, in addition to buying additional modern equipment for moving passengers and freight, expanding residential areas for employees, and other projects which have helped to tangibly improve and develop the organization's services. As for future routes, the organization intends to implement—first of all I want to correct the word "intends," because that word gives the idea that the organization is able to make the decision and begin implementation, when the fact is that the PRO is a government agency, and its projects are tied to the state budget. So it cannot "intend" anything until it is authorized in its budget and its economic feasibility has been established. It should be said at this stage that the organization is looking at the following future expansions: extending a network to serve the Northern Province, which is noted for its huge quantities of raw minerals that can be put to use in the industries of al-Jubayl—such as bauxite, which is abundantly available in the al-Zubaydah area, phosphates in the al-Jalamain [presumably al-Jalamid] area, and iron in Wadi al-Sawawin. This is in addition to the agricultural goods in al-Qasim, Ha'il, and al-Jawf, available in impressive quantities; as well as petroleum goods, chiefly the

amounts of diesel fuel necessary to run agricultural equipment. These movable goods make up huge volumes of between 50-60 million tons annually. Extending a railway line to al-Jubayl's industrial cities, with a network of branch lines within those cities to serve the major plants with large-scale production, would be in cooperation with large companies such as SABIC, Samiric, and the private sector.

The Gulf Link

[Ba-Hakam] It is said that there is a study on linking the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states with a railway line. Is this true? If it is true, what are the stages that the study has planned out? When will it see daylight?

[Al-Shuhayl] The Public Railways Organization has made no such study, but the subject, as far as I know, was put forward as a preliminary study, but it seems that it has not made it to further stages.

[Ba-Hakam] There is a study for linking all the regions of the kingdom with a network of railway lines. What are the stages set out in this study? It would be great if you could shed some light on this project, in terms of when it will be implemented, and the costs and anticipated economic feasibility of the project.

[Al-Shuhayl] Actually, three major studies were prepared in anticipation of the first railroad network in 1371 Hijrah [1952] by the PRO—it was then administered by Aramco, in the time of the late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz, God rest his soul. That study proposed the construction of a railroad line from al-Kharj to Jiddah, an approximate distance of 1,500 km, with branches to 'Unazah, Medina, and Ha'il, distances of 425 kilometers, for a total of 1,925 km. The cost was then estimated at \$200 million. The second study, called (?Movril Wertherlitik), was prepared by the organization in 1395 Hijrah (1975), and proposed the expansion of building the following railroad lines:

A Dammam/Jubayl line, a Riyadh/Jiddah line, a Jiddah/Mecca line, and a Jiddah/Medina line, at a total length of 2,330 km, at a cost then estimated at 4,280 million riyals. The third study, called the (?Centraslav) Comprehensive Transport Study, was done in 1402 H (1982) by the Ministry of Planning and proposed the construction of an integrated rail network to link the kingdom's major cities: Riyadh, Jiddah, Medina, Mecca, al-Ta'if, Yanbu', Duba', Tabuk, Buraydah, and Ha'il. It is a large network, adding up to 3,878 km, and estimated to cost about 24 billion riyals. Generally speaking, so far, none of these studies developed to the stage of implementation. The main reason, it seems, was that their economic feasibility was open to debate, the kingdom's need for population density, and the great burden of preparing these studies, though things are changing quickly now, as a result of the government's efforts in the past 10 years to develop agriculture and industry in the kingdom, which bore fruit in realizing abundant production of grain, cement, fertilizers, and iron, etc. Railroad experts expect this type of bulk transport to increase investment in mineral

services in local industry; transport volume may reach 50-60 million tons per year, as I said in my answer to the first question. Certainly, transport volume of this type, if it is realized, will settle the matter of economic feasibility in the railroad's favor.

Training Workers

[Ba-Hakam] What efforts have been made to train railway workers to raise their technical level? How is the human factor?

[Al-Shuhayl] The organization is bent on training its employees and sending them abroad for study, and in 1401 Hijrah [1981], the present Training Center began to open. It made a comprehensive survey of its people, technicians, and operators, and designed an appropriate training program for those studying the work. Its aim is to improve their job performance and to show them new techniques and modern technology in two courses. The first is preparatory courses whose varied program and curriculum suit the developmental level and expertise of skilled workers. From 1401 Hijrah [1981] through 1406 Hijrah [1986], these courses covered most of the organization's employees in the special technical and operational fields.

Advanced supplementary courses were designed for outstanding staff who took the first courses, in order to upgrade their technical and operating abilities since 1406 Hijrah [1986]. The training department still helps to prepare and develop national trained cadres from outside the organization to work in operational and technical jobs suited to their development and companies' actual needs, especially in the operational and technical fields. This is done through a preliminary training program—which is theoretically appropriate in its materials and program, and practically appropriate in its applications—to prepare the qualified trainee to fill positions in these fields that are vacant or occupied by contractees. The organization calls for some employees to be sent to take special training courses abroad, to be exposed to innovations and modern technology, in addition to sending the organization's financial and administrative employees for appropriate programs in the Institute for Public Administration to improve their job performance.

[Ba-Hakam] Have the existing railways now achieved the anticipated economic feasibility? Has the public accepted these routes?

[Al-Shuhayl] A network of current railway routes serve only two points, which are Dammam/Riyadh, and though the sphere of its activity is very limited, it is currently starting four passenger trains and six freight trains daily, carrying nearly 400,000 passengers and 2 million tons of freight annually. These are impressive numbers, consistent with the scale of the network, and they reflect an excellent response to using the rail route, but the fact is that the organization can cover the cost of

its services only as long as the sphere of its activity widens and its services extend to the various regions of the kingdom.

[Ba-Hakam] It is said that there is a study to put railroad lines in Mecca and the holy places. What are the stages planned in this study?

[Al-Shuhayl] This subject is being dealt with by the Transportation Agency in the Ministry of Communications, the Supreme Hajj Committee, and the Emirate of Mecca Province.

Future Plans

[Ba-Hakam] What do you expect for the future of the railroads in Medina? What will the year 2000 be like?

[Al-Shuhayl] Railway service will have been extended to Western Province, and, undoubtedly, Medina will get a large share of this service and the advanced services which will be offered in time, which are: linking Medina with the port of Yanbu', and the construction of a dry port in Medina to permit the transport of merchants' freight on the direct railway line from Yanbu' to Medina, relieving them from customs and delivering them to owners in warehouses inside Medina. This is in addition to the capability to put in a direct route from Medina to Mecca, with no need to travel to Jiddah to get to Mecca.

SUDAN

Lam Akol on People, Prospects for Peace

92AF0763A Khartoum AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH
in Arabic 17 Apr 92 p 3

[Interview with Dr. Lam Akol, foreign relations official of Al-Nasir Group, by Rashid 'Abd-al-Rahim in Addis Ababa; date not given: "National Grouping Does Not Exist, Garang Does Not Represent the Movement, Remainder Represents No Political Weight"—first four paragraphs are AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH introduction]

[Text] My meeting with him took place in the same house that witnessed his round of negotiating with the government delegation on the side of Garang's forces, after one thing had led to another and he had turned against the government and taken up arms. He is a university professor and politician, formerly a man who expressed himself with words, now one who uses the gun.

A doctor of engineering, he is responsible for foreign relations in the so-called "al-Nasir Group," which is fighting both the government and Garang's forces, from which it has split.

Our session with him at the breakfast table in Addis Ababa's (Qayun) hotel lasted nearly two hours. It was punctuated by remarks and reminiscences about his friends and foes, pleasantries, discussion about the split and the south, and assessment of events, persons, and

positions. It was a diverse conversation that ranged from talk about events and developments to attempts to raise many ideas and issues.

Our motive was to become acquainted with the ideas of a group that has taken up guns to express its belief. Yet the doors of dialogue were not completely shut.

[Abd-al-Rahim] You left Khartoum at a time when there was a multiparty system. Does this mean that you do not believe in the multiparty system? At the time, you were a part of it, as well as being an influential member of the National Grouping. What were the reasons for your leaving Khartoum?

[Akol] The National Grouping arose as a result of the activities that were taking place in the final days of Ja'far Numayri. Political forces were working to overthrow the regime. The political parties and trade unions succeeded in this aim. The National Grouping undertook to implement the agreed-upon goals and principles of the national charter, which mandated nonreligious law and repeal of the September Laws. After the elections, certain parties won a majority. These included the Ummah Party, which was an essential part of the Grouping. However, people were surprised when it did not implement the charter of the uprising. It reached an alliance with the Unionist Party, which left the Grouping. The result was abandonment of the agreed-upon principles. Many people therefore concluded that the Grouping was incapable of realizing the goals of the uprising.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Given your links and closeness to the north and your having lived with Arabs in the north, do you not think it possible to reach a fundamental solution to the Sudan's problem?

[Akol] The relationship between the north and the south has nothing to do with the political solution. One cannot separate citizens in the north and south. Even if the two separate politically, relations between citizens will continue to exist, because they are based on ties, kinship, trade, and love of travel. This must be understood. When we talk about how the attempts at a political settlement have failed, we are not talking about unity between citizens. There is talk about a state different from unity and integration. Recently, it has been clear that the political forces have failed to solve the Sudan's problem, as proved by the long continuance of the war. We believe the only solution lies in recognizing equality among people in civil political rights. People are now talking about an Islamic state in the north. This means violating the right of citizenship. Muslims feel they have a religious duty to implement the shari'ah in the north, or at least on themselves. This feeling is no longer limited to small political parties or a limited number of people; the large political parties in the Sudan hold this principle. We think the majority of northerners believe they have a duty to implement the shari'ah on themselves. We do not deny them this right. At the same time, we think that the shari'ah must not be imposed on us in the south and that it is for us to establish the system that fits our traditions

and ideals. It therefore seems difficult to create a relationship or a unified political state within one framework, for that means violating our rights as citizens. We think the solution is to divide the political system. Commercial, economic, and social relations between the two sections will continue to exist, and the ports would be shared between the sections.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What if people arrive at a system that guarantees southerners greater independence in administering their regions?

[Akol] Greater independence under a central government means there will be a problem in the form of state administration, and this will get us into the same problem.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Can greater mutual understanding not be created?

[Akol] Mutual understanding comes by itself, not by way of the state. We face a major problem that has continued to exist. There is no way to resolve it, save by overcoming the existing problem. It is the problem of reconciling two systems that do not accord with citizens' demands.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Do all southerners demand what you are demanding?

[Akol] To the same extent that all northerners are demanding Islamic law, we say that southerners are demanding separate rights in the south.

[Abd-al-Rahim] But in the north free elections took place and generated Islamic forces.

[Akol] The elections took place on a basis and election plan whereby the people knew that over 80 percent of the members of parliament would automatically advocate Islamic law. In the south people are calling for separation. If anyone doubts the demands of southerners, we have to verify what southerners want: Do they want a regime in the context of a state ruled by shari'ah, or do that want a separate regime? It seems to me that this is the only solution for us to move forward.

[Abd-al-Rahim] In what manner could this be done?

[Akol] If people agree on the manner, certainly the war should stop to hold a referendum to determine the position of the southerners.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What is your agenda for achieving peace?

[Akol] We will propose the same positions. We propose overcoming the political obstacle to stopping the war. We think the only way is to hold negotiations. If any other party brings practical ideas, we will discuss them.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What is your position on the National Grouping now?

[Akol] For us, the National Grouping does not exist. What exists now are wings of political parties. Even in the charter of the Ummah Party that leads this group now—at the head of this party is a person who never was in the leadership, while we find the deputy party head overseas. We know this about all the political parties. The person who now heads the party and the Grouping removed the deputy party head by undemocratic means. Only one wing of the Unionist Party is present in the grouping. As for Garang's wing, it does not represent the whole [liberation] movement now. For me, this group does not represent great political weight as far as we are concerned.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What is the position of the other southern groups present in the movement?

[Akol] We have no disagreement with the groups. Even as far as Garang is concerned—and it is he who is working for goals that have nothing to do with the task—we are confident that when Garang leaves, the two movements will join. The achievement of a peaceful solution is therefore certain.

The movement announced goals and policies that caused some people to join. Those who joined found neither institutions nor democracy in the movement; rather, they found prison camps and assassinations in it. This led to grumbling. This is not the first time; it happened with Carabino, and the Ethiopian authorities imprisoned many people. The split occurred for internal reasons.

[Abd-al-Rahim] The conflicts between you seem to rest on a tribal basis.

[Akol] The disagreements in the movement are internal and related to the way of managing the movement. The factor of tribalism did not enter during the planning and implementation phase. Carabino attempted a Dinka-based coup, and the majority of those imprisoned now are Dinkas. Those who were brutally killed were Dinkas. But the tribal factor was not part of it; what happened was that Garang tried to split the movement's unity on the pretense of secession. He gained nothing by it within the movement, though he gained much overseas. We control areas where there are many Dinkas.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Do you now control non-Dinka areas?

[Akol] We control the areas that participated in the corrective movement. We have influence in areas now considered under Garang's control, although because of travel conditions they have not been able to operate with us.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What was the basic variable that led to the rise of your movement and its success?

[Akol] Military.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What other reasons—political, etc.?

[Akol] In every move one must consider many apparently contradictory factors. Finally, however, one must make a decision, if the basic factors for success of the operation are present. We cannot say that all the factors were present for us, but the basic elements were.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Did the relief agencies help you in the corrective movement?

[Akol] Never. This charge was leveled at us by (Buna) Malwal. Once he was known for his criticism of Garang, but now his position has changed, and he is known for his racist positions. He is the author of the notorious paper that holds that the Dinka have been persecuted. He has charged that the Americans have helped us. His own relations—his and those of Mansur Khalid—with the Americans are well known.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Did Garang also accuse you of this in the Torit reports?

[Akol] Garang made his charge against us from (Buna) Malwal.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Did these charges arise out of nothing?

[Akol] The only reason is that the organizations that work with us talk about freedom of movement, reviewing relief, and ascertaining that it reaches those entitled to it. We do not demand taxes in the relief area, as Garang does, contradicting the idea of relief, which is to be offered free of charge.

The reports of relief agencies in our areas are positive, unlike what is happening in Garang's areas, where they talk about mistreatment by Garang's forces and commandeering of relief supplies.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What if an Islamic organization were to offer relief to areas under your influence?

[Akol] We are for relieving citizens with food, medicine, and shelter. We do not stipulate the political or religious orientation of any organization. The only condition is that the organization be able to provide the relief. If Islamic or other organizations are willing, we welcome it and will discuss it.

[Abd-al-Rahim] How do you assess the government's position on relief?

[Akol] The government's position on aid is that it has honored the lifeline agreement. It has gone further and has allowed citizens to gather relief for the victims on the Sobat River. This has had a beneficial effect on the citizens in the area. This is something positive. However, the other side of the matter is that there are problems with airplane traffic. The government has not been reconciled on this point. I hope the decision will be reviewed, because there are citizens who depend only on relief by airplane.

[Abd-al-Rahim] But the government says the relief organizations are helping the rebels or other parties.

[Akol] We cannot deny that some individuals in some organizations sympathize with Garang's group. For example, there is a relief worker in Bor who works for a Norwegian relief organization and does not conceal his open support for Garang. However, the organization itself does not back Garang or give him any support. We have no indication of organizations that carry weapons to areas controlled by Garang.

[Abd-al-Rahim] But they give food to soldiers.

[Akol] I spoke earlier about food. There are well-known cases in which food was diverted to soldiers. The subject is no secret. Relief supplies are exploited in Garang's areas. This is different, because the organizations have not reported it. They should present the donors a report about how relief is getting through.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Is it not possible to achieve something in peace talks with this government? Is the government serious in this regard?

[Akol] We are confident that we can reach a solution to this problem with the present government. We have had rounds of negotiations previously, and our belief that this government is serious was strengthened because of them. We therefore have entered talks on the essential issues in the conflict. This seriousness is evident. For our part, we will move in the same direction.

[Abd-al-Rahim] On what subjects have you agreed?

[Akol] We are in serious talks. We have gone a long way in discussing the subjects, but it is not time to speak openly yet.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What is your assessment of the present military situation in the south?

[Akol] The military situation does not represent a solution; the solution must be political. The military situation is unstable. A guerrilla movement cannot be eliminated by the army. At the same time, guerrilla bands cannot defeat the government. Whatever the military situation in the field, it is changeable. The problem is basically political, and a political solution is needed.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What is Garang's position? Can he not be brought into the negotiations?

[Akol] I think Garang does not want peace. He now lives in luxury from the movement's income. All the movement's income and concessions are in his hands. The kind of life he now lives would never be available for him with peace. However, those with him are helpless.

[Abd-al-Rahim] There are groups that claim to represent the Dinka. Do they accept negotiations about peace?

[Akol] The problem will not last. Such people tried once before, between 1972 and 1985. They claimed that the south represented them. The proof is what happened in 1973. I do not think they have forgotten that period. They are desperately trying to rally themselves to save

Garang. They know the facts. They were not taken in by the slogan of Dinka unity that Garang leads. Those who were taken in were those who were outside the movement.

[Abd-al-Rahim] The western countries are providing aid. Do you not think this involves some sort of interference and imposition of conditions, like talking about issues of human rights and freedoms?

[Akol] Of course, the only solution finally is that you have freedom to make political decisions and that you have the resources to do so. Whatever we say about aid, whoever gives something wants something finally in return. The western countries are exploiting the suffering of the developing countries. They have done so in many countries, basing themselves on freedoms and human rights. This will not stop. The developing countries must rely on themselves. In the end, whatever the West offers will not be without conditions.

[Abd-al-Rahim] I would like to mention to you the names of some personalities so that you can give us your opinion about them.

[Akol] I usually do not like to talk about personalities.

[Abd-al-Rahim] We want to assess positions through these personalities, if you would be so kind. How about al-Sadiq al-Mahdi?

[Akol] He speaks much and does little. His basic error was that he did not have the political courage needed to make difficult decisions.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Al-Mirghani?

[Akol] Al-Mirghani? Who? Ahmad or Muhammad?

[Abd-al-Rahim] Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani.

[Akol] A respectable religious figure. His involvement in politics influenced the party greatly, but he would have been safer had he left politics in the hands of the politicians in the party.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Yasir 'Arafat?

[Akol] I cannot talk about him now, because he is in Garang's areas and it might expose him to danger—"victimize him" [published in English].

[Abd-al-Rahim] Abel Alier?

[Akol] You could say that he is a leader when the sailing is easy.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Dr. al-Turabi?

[Akol] A practical man with courage to say what he believes in, no matter how much others disagree with him.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Angelo (Bida)?

[Akol] I have not mixed with him enough to be able to pass judgment. He was speaker of the regional parliament briefly. During that time he proved that he was a politician with a view that differs from that of others.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Lieutenant General al-Bashir?

[Akol] He came to power at a critical point in the history of the Sudan. The Sudan will pass judgment on him and on his abilities to resolve the problem.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi?

[Akol] A man who tried hard and failed. He failed as a minister and was unable to get back on his feet as an opposition figure.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Herman Cohen?

[Akol] I never met him. I met his aides.

[Abd-al-Rahim] All right, (Hudik), one of his aides?

[Akol] A practical, diplomatic man. He does not have much knowledge of politics.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Joseph Lagu?

[Akol] (laughing) I cannot. Excuse me, I will not talk about him. (laughing).

[Abd-al-Rahim] Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah?

[Akol] We were brought together by the circumstances of talks. I was the head of the other side. He is a truthful, practical man.

[Abd-al-Rahim] There have been civilian casualties in the war. How can we protect civilians from the war? You were in the movement and in the operations area when a civilian plane was downed in Malakal. How do you view this situation?

[Akol] The recent meeting in Addis Ababa was historic. For the first time it brought together groups that emerged from it with important recommendations, including ones about dealing with civilians and their affairs.

What happened when the airplane was downed in Malakal was a criminal operation personally carried out by Garang through instructions he issued to soldiers in the area. One cannot explain what happened. Even if the government violated the movement's calls for not flying planes in the south, the plane was civilian and could constitute no military objective for the movement. Ninety percent of those who died in the incident were southerners.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Was it not known to the movement's soldiers that it was a civilian airplane?

[Akol] The airplane was identified upon takeoff and bore the markings of Sudan Air, which were visible. Soldiers in the field can identify an airplane before shooting it. Military aircraft have clear identifying marks.

[Abd-al-Rahim] You are now inside the Sudan. The situation in Ethiopia has changed, and Garang controls areas bordering on a number of countries. What is your position in this enclosed land?

[Akol] We have always moved in the context of neighboring countries. He has a relation with the government, and the role he imagined for the neighboring countries was to bring about peace and their relation with the government. We do not wish to be in confrontation with countries that support the government and do not support the movement.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Since the movement began, we have explained our position with all the countries that have relations with the Sudan. These countries know our positions. Do you have dealings with Saudi Arabia and Iran?

[Akol] We have not said that we refuse to deal with the Islamic countries. It is like our position on applying Islamic law in the north: each group has freedom in its own land.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What if a religious state arises in the south?

[Akol] A religious state cannot arise in the south. It is against our attitudes. We think the state should comprehend all people, with each person having freedom of religion. The state's relations should be the same toward all people. No person should occupy a particular position because of religion. Each person should be free without restriction by the state. Our relations with countries are relations of shared interests.

[Abd-al-Rahim] You are fluent in Arabic. There are southerners in large numbers in the north now, and Arabic is present in the south. What is your position on the Arab League?

[Akol] Our position on the Arab League is no longer based on the Arabic language or culture. We know that the League is in a critical situation and is no longer in a position of consensus among the countries. It seems that regional organizations need reassessment now, especially if the Arab League, the Organization of African States, the Nonaligned Group, and such groups have lost many of their reasons for existing. Perhaps in five years we shall not talk about the nonaligned nations and the Arab League.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Does that apply to the United Nations?

[Akol] The United Nations has taken the initiative now and is making decisions that could not be made in the past. This is because of developments in Eastern Europe. The increase in the role of the United Nations and the strength of its role have weakened the regional organizations, which have come to be based on economic interests. We are not talking about the countries of the horn of Africa. I think the future points to new blocs based more on economics than on culture and politics.

[Abd-al-Rahim] But the United Nations does not implement its resolutions on everyone.

[Akol] Indeed, there is weakness in the way the United Nations operates. This is not surprising, because now there is one country that dictates its positions, and there are countries that have the right of veto in the United Nations.

[Abd-al-Rahim] However, the right of veto was established when the international order was different. Now the world has changed.

[Akol] Whether we want it or not, the United Nations in its present form has an increasing role that is leading to the weakening of the regional organizations.

[Abd-al-Rahim] You are now in an enclosed land. If you have weapons, you will use them in the beginning. Fighting on two fronts, how will you obtain weapons?

[Akol] When we established the movement, we established it for the sake of peace. We think that peace will be realized, but, as I said, that requires strength. If it does not take place, we have definite principles. We believe in issues in which citizens in the south believe. This guarantees for us that the movement will endure to realize its goals. Geography ought to be a factor for rapid realization of peace, but it is not that which will realize peace; rather, it is desire on the part of citizens to realize peace.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What if we were to give you the opportunity to address a message to the Sudanese people, southerners in the north, the government in Khartoum, and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Sudan?

[Akol] My message to them all is that now there is an opportunity to discuss positions directly without preconditions unrelated to the problem. We must strive for peace.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What if you were given an invitation to visit Khartoum to hold negotiations?

[Akol] The circumstances now are not favorable for going to Khartoum. Khartoum may not be appropriate now.

[Abd-al-Rahim] What effect has the fall of Mengistu had on the movement?

[Akol] Mengistu's fall helped people take a position against Garang. Mengistu's regime made the mistake of dealing with Garang directly and personally and imposing his influence on the members of the movement. Other foreign causes did not have an influence on the movement.

[Abd-al-Rahim] Did the major powers know of your move against Garang? They announced it on their radio stations.

[Akol] We invited the BBC correspondent from Nairobi. When he arrived, he did not know what was wanted of him.

[Abd-al-Rahim] And the American delegation?

[Akol] The American delegation was on a visit to the refugee sites. When the corrective movement was announced, it was outside (al-Nasir). It was in the (Fashala) district of (al-Nasir). They were on their way to (Afkuk) and heard the announcement only when they reached (Wakshuk) and the BBC correspondent told them.

Al-Turabi Discusses Islamic Movement

92AF0765A Khartoum AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH
in Arabic 8 Apr 92 p 2

[Interview with Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, secretary general of the Arab and Islamic People's Conference, conducted by and reprinted from the newspaper AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH in Khartoum, date not given: "Events in Sudan Same as Events in Algeria," first two paragraphs AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH introduction]

[Text] Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, who Western circles describe as the most dangerous man in Africa, has no official position in the government of the National Salvation Revolution. He is now secretary general of the Arab and Islamic People's Conference. Formerly, he was secretary general of the National Islamic Front [NIF], and before that, controller general of the Muslim Brotherhood, keeping the Islamic movement alive in times of strife and reconciliation. He has been in prison, just as he has been in the government. He has memorized the Koran and speaks four languages. He shuttles among the capitals of the West, gaining the highest testimonials from them. However, al-Turabi has always clung to the soil of his native community.

Over the course of two hours, which were interrupted by a stream of visitors as this interview was conducted in his home in Khartoum, he dealt with issues that we considered to be pressing, concerning ideology and policy.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] You supported army intervention in Sudan, but protested its intervention in Algeria. How do you, Dr. al-Turabi, define the concept of democracy in terms of these two positions?

[Al-Turabi] The current categorization of the regimes in our country, whether they be democratic or military, is a superficial categorization, particularly by Islamic standards. All regimes that have succeeded one another in our country, whether they be a monarchy or a republic, pluralistic or single-party, military or civilian, must be considered man-made systems whose natures are the same. Our experience in Sudan is that various regimes succeeded one another in various forms, with various personnel and political substances. However, the essence of the regimes stayed the same. The civilian, military, diplomatic, or administrative regime is a regime of laws, education, and leading personalities, which changes nothing. These forms are various images of the conflict against authority. Therefore, the most profound division

is between Islamic and non-Islamic regimes. The second matter is that what happened in Sudan is the same as what happened in Algeria, and the same as what continues to happen in many of our Islamic countries. People are given freedom to a specific extent, which inclines them, through that freedom, toward Islamic expression. Then force is used to turn that inclination away from the Islamic qiblah [direction for prayer, Mecca]: Either accept the deep-rooted ruling segments, or the armed forces will be used. Armed forces have been used in many countries of the Middle East to stop popular Islamic expansion. In Sudan, the elected Constituent Assembly unanimously expressed their Islamic desire and endorsed shari'ah [Islamic law] without exception. The truth is that some deputies did not agree, but they chose to leave the hall, so that they would not stand in the way of the Islamic consensus [ijma']. However, the next week at the same time, the army let fly with a memorandum in which it warned the government that it did not agree with its policy and that it was not happy with it. The army advised the ministers that the Islamic ministers must be ousted and the Islamic bill eliminated. The prime minister capitulated and went to the palace. He assembled all political and parliamentary leaders and announced a bill nullifying the people's will that had emerged by parliamentary consensus. However the army, which intervened in Sudan, was [in fact] dominated by the Islamic spirit, despite the commanders who wanted it to be non-Islamic. The army called for a state of complete alert, in order to block any plots. However, this alert allowed all officers to conduct an open dialogue in the barracks. The majority emerged, and the majority was Islamic. The Sudanese Armed Forces was different from many Arab armies. It sided with Islam, because of the power of the Islamic expansion in Sudan. But the army in Algeria, and before it, other armies in the Middle East, were reserves for colonialism. Islamic expansion could not be stopped. When the door is completely shut to democratic means, then it allows Islam free expression, but when this expression became clearly evident, it was suppressed by force of arms. We had to influence Islam with the spurious democratic forms that had suppressed collective expression, the bill in which Islam believed. Even if Islam were to come amicably, gradually, gently, and freely, it would work the same way and would be the consequence for those who have the support of the great masses of people. That was most preferable and essential for us. But, if the paths are blocked, Islam must proceed with a popular revolution or a military movement, as long as it expresses the people's will. The measurement that I used in Algeria and Sudan was: What is the direction of the popular will? The measurement with which I categorize regimes is: What is their nature, man-made or shari'ah? The regime established in Sudan was Islamic, and the regime that was on its way to being established in Algeria was Islamic. I am for Islam, both here and there. The army in Sudan overthrew the military leadership that wanted to suppress the Islamic will, which had emerged in an elected constituent assembly.

The army sided with the people's Islamic choice, while the army in Algeria chose to stand in the way of the popular Islamic choice.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] Do you expect the army's stand against the Algerian people's will to endure?

[Al-Turabi] What I know about the Islamic movement in Algeria is that it has become a popularly-driven force that is greater than can be constrained by formalistic emergency measures. The ruling regime might be able to stop Islamic expansion for some time, but the drive will grow stronger and will explode, and Islam will make up for everything it lost in the stage of repression. Our impression is that Islam will emerge spontaneously, so that it comes gently. However, if development is not accepted, others will resort to revolution.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] What is your evaluation of the settlement process? What is your view of the future of the Palestinian issue?

[Al-Turabi] I don't hope for much good from the settlement process. If it does fail as expected, I will feel the failure on my soul. These negotiations that are underway are an expression of the region's situation following the Gulf war. The view of the Islamic movement, in all its world branches, was correct when it anticipated that the Gulf war was basically aimed at serving Israel. These negotiations are only a confirmation of that view. However, I am certain that the fundamental Islamic position on the Palestinian issue will remain committed to the Palestinian people, whom the intifadah represents. The negotiations only make the fundamental principle of standing with all Islamic people—without exception—more important. That has been neglected by certain political entities that pursue a mirage, whose trust in God and the people has diminished, and who have felt it necessary to seek aid from those who manufactured Israel and who fought the Gulf war on its behalf. I think that this action will only succeed in provoking the people of Islam once more, so that they may consolidate and reinforce their positions.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] After the Gulf crisis and the emergence of this new world order in its imperialist form, a dire need has arisen to establish a front to reject this order. That initiative was the Arab and Islamic People's Conference, except that the conference did not adopt the expected popular dimension. How can this initiative be developed, in terms of expanding its base and adopting its popular dimension?

[Al-Turabi] The initiative of establishing a popular front that would guarantee Muslims their independence in the face of world hegemony, and their steadfastness in the face of Western expansion that wants to obliterate all other cultures and shape them in its own special mold—this initiative came in response to the Islamic phenomenon that accompanied the Gulf crisis. It derives its strength from the existence of this worldwide, popular Islamic expansion. The truth is that, after the Arab and

Islamic People's Conference was established, it was subjected to a counterattack from the world order itself, which does not want Muslims to form a front. It wants to deal with them, bit by bit, and eliminate them one after the other. Another attack could be inspired by the authors of the first attack and could be influenced by their special interests, because these nations also have their international institutions that express the will of the people. However, they express the directions of their regimes. Attacks against the conference have occurred from here and there, but the principle upon which the conference was based is not an artificial principle. On the contrary, it represents a need in this situation. This movement will continue, particularly since the need is for a meeting of popular Islamic forces today, represented by dozens of conferences that are being convened in other countries. Meetings were held in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. This is proof that the Islamic world is looking for a pulpit that will unite it. We wanted, therefore, that the conference not be a branch of the Sudanese Government, because someone could look upon the majority of these conferences as serving the purposes of the governments that hosted them. We wanted it to be as broad as possible, to include all forces of Islam and even forces that were somewhat estranged from Islam, but that today are tending to return to Islam. This could even include non-Muslim elements that are converging culturally with Muslims. The conference could be liberalized to absorb forces of the oppressed Third World nations, with their economic regimes, political regimes, and international military regimes that are harmful to their best interests. Therefore, the Islamic world and the Third World could form something of an alliance, beginning spontaneously from the people. Governments that speak for the people would express this. Even then, the power of this popular expression would necessarily be consolidated in authority and would ultimately be reflected in an international federation, not just a popular world federation. This is a major concept, and major ideas begin small. We hope that we can mobilize to explain it, so that it reaches the Arab and Islamic common man. This will be possible in some countries, but not others. We will try to make this conference represent the movement of modern Arab Islamic history.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] One of the most important features of the new world order was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Islamic republics. There is a contest over these republics. Where does the Islamic movement stand in this context?

[Al-Turabi] Whatever the haste may be of some countries to contact these Islamic republics and shape them into a pro-West religious mold, or one that is loyal to the traditional concept of separation of religion and state, this causes no great concern. There is not a single country today that does not have a purely Islamic activity. It has become a lively, active force. Despite the fact that Westerners characterize the Islamic revival movement as fundamentalist, so that they can differentiate it from

Islam, as if it were deviant or a special kind of Islam, it has become recognized in the world today that this is the same Islam that is being renewed and revitalized. The conventional, traditional, historic Islam was an Islam diminishing in scope and very slight in its significance. Therefore, we consider that the Islamic republics will shift from total ignorance of Islam to awareness of their Islamic identity, to the true Islamic foundation to which we have finally arrived, though efforts between Islam arising in its ideal form, and between the backward customs of Muslims and the West's machinations against every expression of Islamic unity. I am certain that these republics, when they return to Islam, will come back to the true Islam and will not start where we started, but will begin where we left off in developing the Islamic movement from nothing to fulfillment, from meager piety to strength.

The second matter is that these republics probably will prepare us for a renewed impetus, because all religious energy was stifled there, and all the accumulated Islamic expression is now stored in these peoples' natural being. People want the enormous Islamic energy to explode out of these storage areas and achieve these republics' aspirations.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] One does not dispute the need to renew the Islamic movement, but where do we begin? Modernization of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence [fiqh], or widespread popular action?

[Al-Turabi] The Islamic movement is a cultural project, and cultural projects require comprehensive reform, because the branches of reform complement each other and are symmetrical, since deficiency in renewal in any aspect would cause the movement of Islamic cultural progress to fail. The ideas of the Islamic movement are crystallizing. Identifying signs have emerged, which have developed it into stages of establishment and essence. It has become obligatory today for it to offer this pedagogic, intellectual model to all people, particularly since this age is the age of peoples. The popular movement is sentenced to lag behind the requirement of the reality age. This popular renewal of the Islamic movement is the transition from a sect to a popular trend, from a group to a society. This is the requirement of religion and the requirement of socialistic necessity.

The other aspect is intellectual renewal. The Islamic call [da'wah] has continued from time immemorial, preoccupied with the concept of da'wah. It is a controversial concept, which others dispute and contest Islam's right to. However, it is a concept that stops at principles, general conceptions, generalities, and buzzwords, because the dispute was about the fundamental tendency toward religion in public life. I think that the Islamic movement has gone beyond this generality. It must move from generalities to specifics, from renewal to revelation of the Islamic concept toward reality. The people, for the most part, have accepted shari'ah in principle. The question has become urgent—not about the legitimacy of

Islam and its details—but that the da'wah concept must be modernized into the idea of its application, taking Islam from the dimension of the call to the state. Now, a broad, popular will has been generated. If the Islamic movement were to be liberalized and become a masses' popular movement, it would absorb that. That impetus would bring the Islamic movement to the state. The state would require application, in which maneuvers and disputes would be useless. These are two of the aspects of the process of Islamic renewal and the modernization of the Islamic concept from generalities to specifics. It is necessary to agree on a fundamental methodology. We can only generate a concept that will absorb the problems of contemporary life, by agreeing on a specific methodology. This is the significance of modernizing the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. At any specific time, Islamic jurisprudence needs adjustment of Islamic fundamentals to satisfy the requirement of formulating judgement. Muslims of long ago, when they opened up to their peoples, and were introduced to cultures with their educational and material gifts, developed the principles of qiyas [analogy] and tafsir [Koranic exegesis], and the concepts of ijma' [consensus], shura [consultation], and compromise [musalahah]. They redefined them, benefiting from the theoretical methodologies that they acquired, and aimed at dealing with scientific problems that they confronted. We too, today, can acquire a huge stock of theoretical methodologies in order to enrich our Islamic mind. We have a complex reality that we must address with our ideas. This requires modernizing the fundamentals. We are not talking about a new Koran or a new Sunnah [the prophetic traditions], but we are talking about fundamentals, in order to derive and borrow from these invariable fundamentals.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] How can the Islamic movement reach a balance between the internationalism of Islam and the specificity of the countries in which it operates?

[Al-Turabi] Local specificity is based on a legitimate principle. The Islamic call itself began locally with the tribe and relatives, then with Mecca, and from there to the state of Madinah, showing that local fanaticism could close it off from exploring world Islamic horizons. The first Muslim worked to follow this fundamental principle. With it, he fought against non-Islamists, guided his people and shielded them. But, no matter how much local consensus beleaguered him, he was active on the international scene. He was concerned with world affairs and with those he conquered, whether Roman or Persian. He directed his actions toward the world, attaining the international movement of Islam. If the local laws now imposed on us by Western plotting—and strangely enough, by the one Islamic world—require many movements to operate in the local framework, then there is no objection to this. Internationalism does not need an organic link that violates laws. Islam is one value, and Islamic legitimacy today is dealing with that value in the face of challenge. The Islamic movement can adopt the same forms and the same ideologies in each

country and appear as if it were one movement, without continuous membership or being organized under a single main, world leadership. Of course, when observers see a uniting of forms of Islamic experience, they necessarily attribute that to a single plot, which is based on a person or persons who control all the reins of the plot. However, this unity and all these reins are in God's hands, who dispenses Islamic power in various parts of the world. The underlying cause of unity is unity of God and the unity of the path, and not unity of organization. In Islamic jurisprudence, Islam has considered these relationships between the various local entities, and with those who believed and did not emigrate. What did you have? Nothing came to them until they emigrated. So long as the Islamic groups are outside the country that the Islamic movement envelops, the Islamic movement has no loyalty in that country until they emigrate. One cannot make the hijrah at this time ("But if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them" [Koran 8:72]). This response requires organizational affiliation. A political movement can adapt itself to any world event for which it has the power to prepare (except people with whom you have a charter), in accordance with the best interests of treaties and relations. Islamic jurisprudence can absorb the dilemma between internationalism and localism, no matter what it is. Islam's internationalism is a project that it sometimes takes heed of. It is not a place to which we can leap in one jump. The world today is headed toward internationalism. The world is directed, because we are preparing to expand shari'ah, in all its international dimensions. However, this shari'ah—even if the causes of contact and transition were prepared for, and the limits that block the progress of the world of Islam and the Islamic community eliminated—has to be accompanied by some safeguarding of localism. Man must maintain his personal responsibility, even if that is selfish. He must maintain his relationship with his family, being devoted to them without being tribalistic. He must maintain his relationship with his neighbors in the nation without being absorbed in national fanaticism, and [he must maintain relations] that support his people without being ethnic in the sense of bigotry. Even the Islamic community ought not to be adopted by Muslims as a framework. Fanaticism of the religious community [al-millah] obscures the direction of the Islamic call outside the community, preventing others from entering the community. These circles direct the faithful in Islam, without being contradictory with the most universal circle. The most comprehensive loyalty to the Islamic community does not nullify lesser loyalty to links reaching to the family, and the lesser links do not stop with fanaticism under greatness. This question forms a considerable dilemma for Islamic movements, particularly since world communication and constant interaction make all others compelled to be internationalist. International forces operate in every one of our countries. Power follows them and resembles them. We must also be influential throughout the world. We must expand Islam's movement throughout the world, on behalf of building natural legitimacy. We must also work outside of Islam, because the others are working as well.

extending their arms to penetrate the boundaries. They are influencing us. All of life has become a unified life. These boundaries appear today as artificial lines, which means that they do nothing more than divide the unity of Muslims. They do not prevent anyone from attacking the Muslims, but they do prevent the Muslim from reaching his brother. They are against us and not for us. We must rebel against that somehow.

[AL-RABAT AL-MAGHRIBIYAH] Finally, what is your view of the Islamic movement's future in the world?

[Al-Turabi] Throughout my experience in Islamic action and observing the development of Muslims, I have today become somewhat confident that Islam is progressing from the neglect of certain countries to an awakening—awakening in terms of principle to a law, an integrated form and call for everyone, and a call to a state. I consider that this expansion is burdened with capabilities that always lag behind, but any attempt to stop this expansion by force will not push it to resistance and jihad. Any attempt to foment civil strife by propaganda and lies will be turned away and will never derail it. Here is Islam, as if it is nourished and strengthened by the challenges that block its path. It swallows and is strengthened by them. It will make total progress, I am confident, until the lies that have befallen the Islamic world die out and all the temptations that have mortgaged some Muslim leaders are scattered. Islam's power has now become a widespread phenomenon. The phenomenon is represented by circumstances that awaken belief and that enable shari'ah to be an alternative to old laws. Conditions that are stipulated will be fulfilled. Worshipers will inherit the land. It is possible for someone to submerge his nature in a scientific or economic empire, or military power that rejects shari'ah. It will make people be one community, one doctrine. If God wills, he will make the people one community.

I am confident that the Islamic expansion today will not be stopped until it achieves this scope, and until Islam is an independent entity in the world; an entity that is an acceptable alternative to the materialist, irreligious entity in the other world, as evidence for the people and based on the people, under God's command, in a subsequent stage.

Numayri's Coup Intentions Questioned

92AF0788A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 May 92
p 13

[Article by Yusuf Nur 'Awad (Sudanese professor at Stalford University, United Kingdom): "Truth About Numayri Group's Coup in Sudan"]

[Text] Khartoum was expected to announce a series of arrests in the wake of the report of a coup attempt that former president Ja'far Numayri is alleged to have directed with Mr. Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani and Colonel John Garang. Khartoum was also expected to use the report as an excuse to announce a new coup plot,

on the basis of which it would eliminate certain opposition figures, alleging that the aim of the plot had been to cover up purported victories in the theater of war in the south.

What is the truth about the "coup"? How credible is this rumor?

An opposition leader in London telephoned me two weeks ago, told me the details that were subsequently published, and asked me to give my opinion about them. I said forthwith that the information available to me denied any rapprochement between the three purported participants in the coup and that I believed that at least two of them were not at present engaged in such activity. The publication of the details a few days after my conversation with the opposition figure made me consider the matter again and try to draw together some of the views and ideas in the air about the possibility. I find it necessary to summarize these ideas in the following article to dispel suspicions and put an end to the talk.

About two months ago, I was in Saudi Arabia, where I was contacted by Shaykh Khalafallah 'Umar, the former religious attache of the Sudanese embassy in Jiddah, a moderate and kindly man. He asked me to speak to Mr. Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani about current tensions in the Sudan. I in fact made an appointment to see al-Mirghani at his home in Mecca. He wanted the meeting to be limited to myself, Shaykh Khalafallah 'Umar, and Mr. Hatim, his private secretary.

My belief was that he did not want some of his ideas about certain matters to reach the press explicitly. However, he encouraged me to speak about any subject I had on my mind and promised to answer every point with complete candor. He allowed me to raise all the points, which took a long time. When he replied, I noted that he left not a single point unanswered.

I began my conversation with the disagreement within the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). I said that the religious-political dichotomy within the party was the cause of the problems, and that he, as party leader, ought to play a clear political role to restore unity to the conflicting elements in the center party.

Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani denied that his party was divided between sectarianism and politics. He affirmed that the Khatmiyah [Order] was part of the broad grouping of Muslims, and that he had never ceased to define his political role clearly. He pointed to the agreement reached between him and John Garang before the coup of the National Islamic Front (NIF). He said that if the agreement had been carried out, it would have ended the problem of the south peacefully and would have spared the country much bloodshed. He pointed to his recent telegram to Nigeria's President Babangida concerning negotiations between the government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). He said that this telegram had halted any nonnational attempt to solve the problem of the south. He pointed to his role in preserving good relations

between the Sudanese people and the governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), despite the Sudan's position on the Gulf crisis—not to mention the harm to which he was exposed personally at the hands of the Khartoum Government.

I then brought up the subject of the NIF and its relation to the government. I asked Mr. al-Mirghani: "Do you not think an understanding with the government would spare the country more future conflict, particularly now that the NIF has succeeded in dominating the government? Do you not think the NIF is exploiting the coldness between you and the government to implement its extremist, pro-Iranian policies in the Sudan?"

Al-Mirghani answered: "There is no difference at present between the NIF and the ruling regime in the Sudan. The NIF rejects any understanding between the government and the opposition, because that is the only way that enables it to realize its goals."

I asked al-Mirghani, "Are you not now considering opposing the government by using force?" He replied firmly that he had never known the Khartoum to take up arms to achieve a political goal; they were people of prayer and devotion who did not turn to violence to achieve their goals. I asked him, "What would your position be if countries like the United States, Britain, and others moved to deal with the present Sudanese regime in order to realize their interests?" He replied: "We cannot stop any state from working for its interests. But we will go along with any state only to the extent that doing so serves the interests of the Sudan."

I asked al-Mirghani about the position of Mr. al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and possibilities of an individual reconciliation between him and the regime. Al-Mirghani assured me that he trusted al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's wisdom and experience and did not believe the latter would undertake a step contrary to the real interests of the opposition. I then asked him about his relations with the Sudan's former president Ja'far Numayri, the report that there was political coordination between them, and Numayri's possible return to power. Al-Mirghani denied that there was any special coordination between him and Numayri and called any possible return of Numayri to power unlikely.

While speaking to me, al-Mirghani did not affect any position, but allowed himself to speak naturally. His sense of pain regarding the government's position toward him was great, but at the same time he was determined to bear his political responsibilities as fully as possible.

By coincidence, former president Ja'far Numayri happened to be in London when the report of the alleged coup was published. I went to visit him to clarify the real state of affairs. He said to me: "The publishers of the report said that I had changed my residence in Bayswater in order to meet the representative of John Garang; yet here you are meeting me at the address from which they

said I had moved! The legal maxim says that if part of the proof is invalidated, the entire proof is invalid."

I asked Numayri, "Are you considering a return of the May revolution to power?" He answered: "I am not thinking about rolling back the wheel of history. Those who are working with me have accepted the multiparty principle. This is the only way to solve the problems of the Sudan." I asked President Numayri, "To what extent are you allied with the DUP and the opposition National Democratic grouping?" He replied: "I maintain normal relations with some of its people, such as Dr. Ahmad al-Sayyid Ahmad, but I have not attempted to coordinate my efforts with them. Everything said about how I requested cooperation with them and how they refused has no basis in truth."

I asked President Numayri, "Has there not been any particular action on your part against the government?" He answered, "Everything is possible." I asked him, "Do you not think the report of a coup is useful in terms of sending a special message to al-Sadiq al-Mahdi?" He answered, "No doubt; political action must make use of all effective means."

I left with the impression that the report that former president Numayri was engineering a coup against the government had no basis in truth. Some people close to him told me it was unlikely that John Garang would be interested in such an affair in this period when he is confronting pressures in his party on the side of the government. The government, they said, would attempt to concentrate on this issue until the end of this June, which was the date for celebrating the third anniversary of the coup, so as to avoid questions about its other economic and political accomplishments.

It seems that talk about a possible coup in the Sudan is a kind of political vaporizing not based on sound foundations. It would be better to attend to the basic issue: finding a way out of the Sudan's real crisis, a way in which the remaining parties would participate.

More Confiscation of Opposition Property

92AF0764C Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 30 Apr 92 p 1

[Article by Majdi Hilmi: "Ruling Military Council in Sudan Confiscates Clothes, Effects of 170 Oppositionists"]

[Text] Sudanese opposition sources yesterday revealed details of the confiscation of property of 170 Sudanese "opposition" members living abroad. The confiscation took place last Sunday, when a military committee stormed and smashed homes of the opposition members and confiscated their furniture, clothing, and money. The military committee also confiscated all precious objects, and even underwear. After the confiscation was completed, the houses were sealed. The confiscation is part of a series of retributive measures that the ruling military council in Sudan is taking against opposition members abroad. The confiscation measures included

'Uthman al-Mirghani, leader of the [Democratic] Unionist Party; Lt. Gen. Fathi Muhammad, [former] commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces; Muhammad al-Hasan, former member of the presidential council; Faruq Abu-'Isa, former foreign minister and secretary general of the Arab lawyers [association]; and Dr. Amin Madani, chairman of the Sudanese Human Rights Organization. Muhammad al-Hasan categorized the confiscation measures as a means to terrorize the Sudanese people, and affirmed the opposition's resolve to escalate the struggle to topple the ruling military council.

Director Explains Zakat Budget, Disbursement

92AF0764A AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH in Arabic
5 Apr 92 p 2

[Article by Ikhlas 'Abd-al-Rahim: "In Frank Discussion With Zakat Office Secretary General: "Millions of Pounds To Support Poor, Achieve Social Justice; Productive Quick-Return Projects in States"]

[Text] Muhammad Ibrahim Muhammad, secretary general of the Zakat [almsgiving] Office, said that the office is helping to achieve social justice by offering assistance to 500,000 families at a cost of 1 million Sudanese pounds monthly, and that the resolution by the Revolutionary Command Council and the cabinet confirmed that the party that implements the decision to give assistance to poor families is the Zakat Office.

Muhammad Ibrahim said the office's plan to give assistance to poor families aims at pleasing God, ensuring that disbursements (salaries) reach the poor families, establishing the credibility of the regime, and proving the effectiveness of zakat.

He said the office acted speedily through the zakat committees in Omdurman, and that contacts have been maintained with the ministers of agriculture and finance and the states' secretaries.

The 500,000 families have been distributed as follows: Khartoum State, 80,000; Central Region, 80,000; Eastern Region, 80,000; Northern Region, 50,000; Darfur [State], 40,000; Kordofan and Equatoria State, 40,000 each; and Bahr al-Ghazal and Upper Nile states, 30,000 each. This is in addition to 15,000 evacuees.

He added: "The distribution of families among the states has been based on need and population density. Disbursements have been made from cash deposits. Payments started on 11 February 1992. Some 59,000 families in Khartoum and the Eastern Region received payments at the rate of 90 percent [meaning of percentage unclear]. A delegation went to Juba and began payments in Equatoria State, [the town of] Malakal, and the town of Li Rangu. The zakat delegation will go to Raga and Uwayl towns."

Muhammad Ibrahim affirmed that payments to poor families have been fair and were carried out simultaneously in all states. Entitlement to assistance is conditional upon the family not having any regular income, whether from the public sector or private sector, and qualifying as poor or destitute. Being a Muslim is not a qualifying condition, since these funds are not zakat funds. [as published]. He pointed out that "This is the first time that the citizen has felt that the government cares for him, and that it has reached the poor and destitute in their homes." Referring to the Zakat Office's active role in this field, he announced that "There are 50 zakat offices in all the states. Those employed in the zakat offices are chosen according to certain rules and receive training in Islamic law [shari'ah] and accounting."

The secretary general of the Zakat Office said, "The office's plan is to help citizens to own the means of production and to set up projects to earn their livelihood, so that the poor will not remain poor. Such projects will be simple, low-cost, easy to manage, with a quick return, and environmentally suitable. During the past six months, ownership of 347 sewing machines, 200 plows, 353 poultry incubators, 171 vegetable slicers, 135 pasta-making machines, 325 mule-driven carts, 65 agricultural kiosks, and 12 harvesters, has been transferred to citizens, at a cost of 1.6737 billion pounds, from which 3,000 families have benefited nationwide. Other projects are underway, including one for the production of 10,000 traditional plows in Darfur, a project for egg-laying chickens in Kordofan, and an agricultural project in Dilling and Kadugli. The Darfur and Kordofan projects were the most successful."

The Secretary General of the Zakat Office said that this year's budget totalled 30.8 million pounds. Zakat revenue in Sudan during the past year totalled 774.1 million pounds, an increase of 186 percent. The provinces budgets were as follows: 252.6 million pounds for the Central Region, 63.2 million pounds for Khartoum, 44.2 million pounds for Darfur Region, 40.7 million for Northern Region, 22.1 million pounds for Kordofan Region, 13.6 million pounds for Li Rangu office, and 24.6 million pounds for the companies' secretariat. [as published]

The Secretary General of the Zakat Office said, "Administrative obstacles and jurisprudence [fiqh] points prevent collecting zakat from expatriates. The administration abides by jurisprudential legality with regard to levying zakat [taxes] on the expatriate's income. We have been unable to find answers to these jurisprudence questions. Zakat payment by expatriates is voluntary. Brother expatriates are being enlightened on the matter. The conference on zakat and its resolutions were reviewed during the hajj season last year. Contacts have been made with brother expatriates in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Libya, and an office for zakat expatriates affairs has been opened. Zakat booklets and documents

have been sent to Sudanese embassies abroad and voluntary collections in foreign and local currencies have begun, but the collection is going at a slow pace."

The Secretary General of the Zakat Office said that any salary below 6,000 pounds is not subject to zakat taxes.

Concluding his talk about the office's contribution to other activities, he said that it provides funding for medical treatment in the various fields, such as financing medical institutions which treat the poor, the destitute, and all those who cannot afford medical treatment, whether inside or outside Sudan. Adequate assistance, not exceeding 15,000 pounds, is provided for treatment. Also, 25 million pounds in aid has been provided to the Students' Fund, and individual students have received assistance.

Local Grain Said Bartered for Libyan Arms

92AF0872A FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE
in German 26 May 92 p 8

[Article by Udo Ulfkotte: "Sudan Exchanges Grain for Weapons: 50,000 Tons of Sorghum Shipped to Libya: Will EC Cancel Emergency Aid?"]

[Text] Bonn, 25 May—Despite the fact that in the south of the country tens of thousands of civil war refugees are on the verge of starving to death, the government is engaged in large-scale food exports, according to its own reports. At the same time, Khartoum expects the industrial nations to provide emergency food supplies. A report distributed by Sudan's embassy in Bonn states that "the harvest of the 1991/92 season has broken existing records." Therefore, it continues, 50,000 tons of sorghum have already been exported to Libya. At the same time, the Sudanese government states that the food situation is "insecure" in some parts of the country. To ensure human survival, there is need, in the Kordofan and Darfur regions alone, for an additional 133,000 tons of cereal products—from abroad. A Sudanese diplomat in Bonn, Ayik, stated in an interview with this paper that in view of the civil war in Sudan it was "difficult to transport the surplus grain to the people threatened with death by starvation in the southern part of the country." A representative of the donor countries, who did not want to be identified, accused the Sudanese Government of "creating hunger in the south specifically to subdue the rebels."

Inasmuch as the price of sorghum on the world market is currently around 400 German marks [DM] per ton, the 50,000 tons exported to Libya are worth DM20 million. Western diplomats indicate that the Sudanese Government is said to have used the proceeds of these food sales for the purchase of weapons from Libya and Iran. The opposition paper SUDAN DEMOCRATIC GAZETTE, published outside the country, has in the past reported on such Sudanese weapons purchases. Western food donor countries have reported that in past years, too, the Sudanese Government has routinely exported its food crops and has subsequently approached the World Food

Program (WFP) and the donor countries with demands for free food shipments, citing an impending famine. With the proceeds from its own harvest, the Arab government is said to have purchased weapons to continue the civil war—principally from Iran—against the black southern Sudanese. In view of past experience, the donor countries seem no longer inclined this year to provide indirect support to this course of action on the part of Sudan. In addition, representatives of the donor countries indicate that it is questionable whether the "very expensive" EC and UN air-transported food shipments by way of Uganda to such government-held south Sudanese cities as Juba will be allowed to continue.

Since 1983, a bloody civil war has been raging in southern Sudan between the now splintered Sudanese freedom movement, SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army], and the troops of the central government. While the southern part of the country is primarily inhabited by Christian-animist peoples, Muslim-Arab peoples live in the north. In the past, the black southern Sudanese have accused the Muslim central government of grave human rights violations and attempted genocide. Prior to the upheavals caused by the civil war, many Christian and animist southern Sudanese have fled to the vicinity of the capital city of Khartoum. There have been repeated reports that the government ordered the destruction of their illegal shantytowns by bulldozers and armed force. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reports that last February the government "dissolved" a refugee camp, inhabited by more than 10,000 people, outside the capital, by loading the people onto trucks, transporting them into the desert, and leaving them to die of hunger. Diplomats state that the Muslim government's inhuman actions against the civil war refugees could be hidden from the rest of the world only because international organizations had never been given access to the refugee camp.

The press officer of the ICRC in Geneva, Rodin, has informed this paper that the Khartoum government has "completely blocked" the ICRC's work in southern Sudan since early May. The ICRC has been forbidden to render any kind of assistance. He further indicated that the director of ICRC foreign activities, de Courten, is presently in Khartoum for consultations with the Sudanese Government concerning the continuation of ICRC assistance to southern Sudan. In its press bulletin, the Sudanese Government accuses foreign assistance organizations, apparently referring to the ICRC, of conducting espionage activities, and writes that "the government has now gained the impression that charity amounts to a sort of humiliation." And apparently referring to the donor nations, it is stated that "the politics of food has in effect been managed by unfriendly nations so as to bend Sudan to their will." These pronouncements by the Sudanese Government, together with the major export of food, which has now become known, have brought about one result: Germany will request of the EC Commission that not a single gram of the intended 100,000 tons of grain shipments be sent to

Khartoum. That amount from the EC Food Assistance Program was to have been delivered to Sudan in view of the hundred years' drought. This would have constituted one-eighth of the total assistance to the drought-impacted states. It is Bonn's wish that this quantity now be used for the benefit of other deserving countries, thus forcing Khartoum to reconsider its inhumane conduct in the civil war.

TUNISIA

Foreign Minister Briefs Ben Ali on Nonaligned Meeting

LD1805225592 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 18 May 92

[Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali met at Carthage Palace this morning with Mr. Habib Ben Yahya, the minister of foreign affairs, in the presence of Mr. Hamed Karoui, the prime minister. Mr. Habib Ben Yahya briefed his excellency the president on the mission he entrusted upon him in Indonesia, where he represented Tunisia at the recent meeting of the non-aligned group. He also briefed him on the results of the meetings of the procedural committee and the ministerial committee which discussed ways of coordinating the action of this group in preparation for the forthcoming nonaligned summit due to be held early September in Indonesia. The head of state expressed his interest in the new impetus given to the Nonaligned Movement, especially with regard to reviewing its methods of work in order to assert its existence in the international arena and adopt unified stands on the current economic issues, including in particular indebtedness, the environment and the trade negotiations within the framework of the Uruguay Round.

His excellency the president gave his instructions to follow up these files, to highlight Tunisia's role at this level and highlight his initiatives about all these issues, particularly the debt issue, and his interest in the environment and the immigration issue.

The minister of foreign affairs also conveyed to his excellency the president greetings from the Indonesian President Suharto and his appreciation for Tunisia's action to bolster South-South cooperation. President Suharto also renewed his invitation to President Ben Ali to visit Indonesia. During the same meeting, the head of state was also briefed by the minister of foreign affairs on the contacts he held, on the sidelines of the meeting of the nonaligned group, with his counterparts from sister and friendly states, especially the Indonesian foreign minister. Moreover, Mr. Ben Yahya also briefed his excellency the president on the recent meeting of the seven-man Arab committee [held to discuss] the crisis between Libya and some Western states. President Ben Ali reiterated Tunisia's anxiousness to continue the efforts to find a peaceful solution that would spare the fraternal Libyan people the serious repercussions of this crisis.

Foreign Minister Meets Russian Commodities Market Heads

LD2705163792 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 26 May 92

[Text] Mr. Habib Ben Yahya, minister of foreign affairs, received at the ministry this morning a delegation of the Russian Commodities Market headed by Mr. Yuri Kotov, president of the market.

This delegation is currently visiting Tunisia at the invitation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the south.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged viewpoints on ways and means to bolster and diversify commercial and economic cooperation between Tunisia and Russia.

Karoui Rejects Mixing Political, Association Activity

LD0206214792 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Jun 92

[Excerpts] Mr. Hamed Karoui, deputy chairman of the Constitutional Democratic Rally [RCD] and prime minister, chaired at the conference hall in the capital this morning the opening of the national conference of professional cells and federations [of the ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally, RCD, set up within various institutions such as banks, ministries, national companies], which is being held under the chairmanship of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. [Passage omitted noting Karoui highlighted the role of these cells and federations, reviewed party work, praised Tunisian achievements in the field of human rights, stressed the need to back party cells and federations]

He pointed out the concord existing between the RCD and the opposition parties, which discuss its choices and hold dialogue with it in the interest of the country. He explained that the higher board of the National Pact [between political parties and trade unions] embodied this concord and this dialogue which takes place in the framework of pluralism and democracy. [Passage omitted in which Karoui mentioned that the Chamber of Deputies is about to discuss the 8th development plan].

Mr Hamed Karoui explained that human rights, which were entrenched by the change [from Bourguiba to Ben Ali] in words and in deeds and gave it its real essence, cannot be in any way a vehicle for designs that have nothing to do with them and cannot be exploited for political aims or monopolized. [Passage omitted praising new law on associations]

He added that political action has its limitations and domains and that the associations have their role and missions, and that mixing between political action and association activity is unacceptable in the state of democracy and pluralism, because it is a crime against

democracy and hiding behind it so as to practise monopolization and exclusion. [Passage omitted saying that all Tunisians are equal and anybody can join any association].

Mr Hamed Karoui affirmed that there is no intention to take over the Human Rights League, but that the aim is that the associations should be independent and work for the goals for which they were set up, as affirmed by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in his speech of 12 May last.

Appeal for ICO Talks on Bosnia-Herzegovina

*LD2105222292 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 21 May 92*

[Text] An authorized source at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave the following statement:

While Tunisia follows the painful events currently taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina with great concern, to which the civilian population—the majority of whom are Muslims—has fallen victim, it condemns any intervention in the internal affairs of this young republic.

While recalling the appeals His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has made, and the stances taken by Tunisia, and the resolution passed in this respect by the recent round of the Nonaligned Movement countries in Indonesia, Tunisia appeals once more for an immediate stop to the fighting, and for the continuation of negotiations with the aim at arriving at a political solution which respects the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its territorial integrity.

In the face of the foreign forces' refusal to withdraw from the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to respect international legitimacy, and in view of the need to put an end to the civilian population's suffering, Tunisia thus calls for the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO] to discuss the development of the situation in this republic.

Interior Ministry To Establish Human Rights 'Cell'

*LD2005165692 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 May 92*

[Excerpts] Opening a training seminar on police and society, the Minister of State and Minister of Interior, Abdallah Kallel, stated that all the duties entrusted to the security forces by the country's constitution, various agreements and the numerous laws enacted are designed to consolidate and protect human political, economic, social and cultural rights.

He said that the new era came to consolidate those trends by bolstering the legal principles stated in that sphere at the internal and external levels, and by giving substance and providing the practical dimension to those principles in daily practice. [Passage omitted]

The minister of state and interior minister made it clear that this was the real change in Tunisia in the new era, and that it was considered by President Ben Ali himself as the greatest victory in the process of construction and change, and the biggest fortress against the forces of fundamental extremism and terrorism, which, under the guise of religion, became the real violator of human rights—collecting and manufacturing weapons, planning assassinations, and spreading chaos and terror in the hearts of peaceful citizens. However, all those attempts failed before the solidity of the project for a democratic society.

Abdallah Kallel said that, with the head of state's permission, a cell [khaliyah] that will be concerned with human rights and citizens' welfare—similar to those established in many other ministries—has been established at the Interior Ministry. Orders have also been issued to security cadres to further respect human rights and public liberties.

It is worth noting that the proceedings of the seminar will continue until 21 May. Its proceedings continued today with a lecture by the chairman of the Higher Committee for Human Rights, Rachid Driss, on police and human rights. [passage omitted]

Government Raises Minimum Wage in Agriculture, Industry

*LD1505121592 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 May 92*

[Text] A statement issued this morning by the Ministry of Social Affairs states that in implementation of the decision of the president of the Republic on 1 May 1992 to raise the minimum secured wage in the industrial and agricultural sectors, a meeting was held on Tuesday, 12 May 1992, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Hamed Karoui, and encompassing representatives of the government and the vocational organizations.

After debating the state of the minimum secured wage and evaluating the general economic and social conditions in the country, the following was approved:

1. Raising the minimum secured wage for the various vocations by 8 Tunisian dinars per month for the 48 hours' work-per-week system.
2. Raising the minimum secured agricultural wage by 200 millimes [.2 dinar] daily.
3. Incorporating the special subsidized grant for the benefit of those working at the minimum secured wage in the various vocations and those working at the minimum secured agricultural wage, and to include it in the expenditure accounts.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Editorial on Territorial Disputes, Saddam

92AE0379B *Al-Shariqah AL-KHALIJ in Arabic*
18 Apr 92 p 1

[Commentary: "This Border Nightmare!"]

[Text] What is this that is going on in and around the region?!

Is it a coincidence that four border disputes have been stirred up at the same time within just two weeks?

Is it not a painful coincidence that the stirring of these disputes comes at the same time that the international commission charged with drawing the borders between Kuwait and Iraq announced that it had completed its task?

These are questions that raise themselves, but we can do nothing but sigh and be stuck with feelings of despair and frustration.

What miserable state is this region living under? Where do those who rashly embark on the game of border disputes come from?

Did we not learn from the latest harsh and exorbitantly expensive crisis? Does anyone think that the region has escaped from the noose of the crisis and its mire, only to knock on the doors of new crises?

Did everyone not announce, after the crisis and the war had ended, that they would repudiate everything that could strain the atmosphere of bilateral relations and the regional situation? Let those whose memories deceive them read the first principle in the "Kuwait Declaration" that came out of the 12th Gulf Summit held in liberated Kuwait last December. It states: "In their international dealings, [Gulf Cooperation] Council [GCC] states will strive to respect the principle of neighborliness and to commit themselves to respecting international sovereignty, to the unlawfulness of gaining land by force, and to solving disputes by peaceful means." This paragraph was a clause that was included in the "Damascus Declaration," on which we wanted basically to build a new Arab order. So where did this principle go?! What is the use of declarations and conferences if their results are not implemented, and the spirit of their expressions bear the stamp of political behavior, political decision-making, and political speech?!

Was not the lesson of the crisis—that great ordeal—that border disputes must be solved quickly through dialogue and mutual understanding, but if that is impossible, then through the courts, and not by unilateral measures that then require countermeasures?

Is this "neighborliness," and "solving disputes through peaceful means?"

We have not yet forgotten that the first tokens of the aggression by Saddam's regime on Kuwait were a border mistake, a border oil well, and a border island.

Border disputes are mines that were planted decades ago, and they are always ready to explode. Unfortunately, not enough has been done to remove these mines, and those involved with them have not been in a hurry to place them on the table for discussion in order to solve them in a friendly manner, or to turn them over to international judgement if they resist solution.

If GCC member countries or other Arab countries that have border issues dividing them will not work to create climates for solution through dialogue, and if they do not seem to strive for good neighborliness, then what have we to say about border disputes with non-Arab countries?

Throughout the past week, we have been distressed by what the news agencies have been reporting about border disputes that have been stirred up in more than one place. Not only that, but some of them were accompanied by news of saber-rattling and of forces being placed on alert. What in God's name is going on? Where are events taking us?

That which is going on cannot be classified as anything less than playing with fire.

Is our region and our Arab world in a position to bear more fires?

Speaking to one another through a statement issued from here, to be replied to by a statement from there, is something that makes us lament the circumstances under which we live, and to lay talk of cooperation and coordination in its final resting place. Moreover, it makes any expression of a common future and a common fate devoid of any guarantee or credibility.

Deciding issues with weapons is forbidden. Brandishing weapons is forbidden. Straining the atmosphere and shadowing it with clouds of doubt and anxiety are forbidden. Speaking to one another through a third, foreign party is deplorable and reprehensible. If not, then the difference between what border events could develop into, and what Saddam Husayn did, will be a difference of degrees and not of type.

Agricultural Ministry Details Completed Dams

92AE0379A *Al-Shariqah AL-KHALIJ in Arabic*
19 Apr 92 p 4

[Text] Dubayy—A report by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries stated that, over the last 10 years, it has built about five dams in various emirates in the state. It built the Wadi Ham dam in the Emirate of al-Fujayrah in 1982 (16 m high, 2,800 m long, storage capacity 7 million cubic meters [m³]; the Wadi al-Bih dam in the Emirate of Ra's al-Khaymah, also in 1982; (18 m high, 570 m long, storage capacity 7 million m³); and the Wadi

Idhn dam, also in Ra's al-Khaymah, built in 1983 (10 m high, 110 m long, storage capacity of a 250,000 m³).

The report added that the ministry had built the Wadi Zikt dam near the Emirate of al-Fujayrah. The dam's location had been selected for high economic feasibility, in addition to the protection it would offer from the annual destruction [by flooding] to property and blocking of roads. It can supply an area of 23 hectares, and it is 21 meters high, 230 m long, and has a storage capacity of 3.5 million m³. There is also the Wadi Hadhaf dam in the Muzayri' region in Masfut that was built last year. This region is one that is shut off and surrounded by a chain of steep mountains, and water runs off quickly without having a chance to feed underground reserves. Therefore, this region suffers from a scarcity of water; in addition, it has highly intensive agriculture, which has created a big deficit in underground reserves. The dam is 10 m high, 850 m long, and has a storage capacity of 3 million m³.

The report stated that, by building these dams, the ministry had succeeded in trapping the water of the wadis that was lost to the sea every year, in addition to feeding underground reserves and raising the water table. This will help to make up part of the deficit in the underground reserves, besides providing water for agricultural, domestic, and industrial purposes; improving water quality; protecting underground layers; impeding the encroachment of saline water; and protecting public property, especially from destruction by floods.

According to Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' weather stations, rainfall this year recorded large amounts. In October, rainfall in the state was 7.4 mm; in November it was 111 mm; in December it was 600 mm; in January 1,321 mm, and in February 989 mm. These figures are seen as a strong indication that underground water reserves will grow this year, which bodes well.

The report explained that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is now making the necessary arrangements to carry out an ambitious plan to build four new dams. The first is to be in Wadi Safni in al-Dhayd in the emirate of al-Shariqah, where it is estimated that around 99 hectares could benefit from its water. The second will be in Wadi al-Naqab in Ra's al-Khaymah, and it will supply an area of up to 78 hectares, most of which will be in the regions of Ra's al-Khaymah, which is suffering from water salinization and a drop in the water table as a result of the high intensity of agriculture, especially in the regions of al-Diqdaqah and al-(Nukhayl), and in the region of 'Ayn Khatt.

The ministry also intends to build a future dam in Wadi al-Wurayyah in Ra's al-Khaymah, to supply areas estimated at about 50 hectares of agricultural land by feeding underground reserves, and to protect property, villages, farms, and streets, which the wadi inundates in each flood, causing problems for the people. It will also build a fourth dam in Wadi Kub.

Agricultural studies have confirmed that building these dams is of the utmost importance in the emirates, which have a hot, dry climate, where maximum temperatures reach 48 degrees centigrade, average annual rainfall is 102 mm, average humidity reaches about 98 percent, and evaporation is between 3.16 and 4.45 mm.

The ministry is currently building a dam in Wadi al-Tawiyayn in the Emirate of Ra's al-Khaymah, which will be about 22.5 m high and 34.5 m long. It is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Its cost will be about 35 million Emirian dirhams, its storage capacity will be 17 million m³, and about 134 hectares of agricultural land in the emirate will benefit from its water.

WESTERN SAHARA

Polisario Chief in Paris for Talks

PM2205103492 Paris LE MONDE in French
20 May 92 p5

[Mouna Naim report: "Polisario Front Secretary General Prepared To Make a Concession"]

[Text] Mohamed Abdelaziz, secretary general of the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro] and "president of the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic" [SDAR] has been in Paris since Friday 15 May where he hopes to be received at the Elysee and the Quai d'Orsay. His approach is taking place less than 15 days from the expiry of the deadline set by UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali for breaking the deadlock on the West Saharan peace plan or finding an alternative solution. In an interview to LE MONDE, the Polisario Front secretary general said he is prepared to make a concession to encourage a settlement of the conflict.

To ensure that the UN peace plan stipulated by Security Council resolution 690 in April 1991 is implemented and that there is a referendum on self-determination in the West Sahara, the Polisario is prepared to make some concessions on the drafting of electoral lists "within the bounds of what is reasonable," Mr. Abdelaziz told us. However, he hastened to add, this is provided that Morocco "takes steps to break the deadlock" and remove the obstacles which it "is creating artificially."

Without wishing to go into the details "which we will discuss with the Moroccans within the UN framework," he said, Mr. Abdelaziz admitted that "there could be a margin of error varying between 1 and 10 percent in the 1974 census carried out by the Spanish" (74,000 Saharans) before the decolonization of the West Sahara and on the basis of which the UN peace plan was adopted. "But it is wrong to claim a margin of error of 200 percent," he said indignantly, referring to Rabat's request to extend the right to vote to an additional 120,000 people—displaced during the colonial period—on the basis of a list presented to former UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

This Moroccan demand and its rejection by the Polisario are behind the indefinite postponement of the referendum, which was initially scheduled for last January and which should enable the Saharans to give their verdict on independence or integration into Morocco. Mr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali has given himself until 31 May to implement the peace plan or seek "other lines of action."

A 'Gesture' From France

Mr. Abdelaziz is bitter toward France which, he says, supported the report drawn up by Mr. Perez de Cuellar in December 1991 proposing to very considerably expand the Saharan electorate by including a large proportion of the displaced populations. He thinks that Paris "owing to its links with the North African countries must accept some responsibility" in ensuring that the plan is implemented and calling on Morocco "to abandon its inflexible stance."

"The French Government must also make a gesture to us," if only in return for the gesture made by the Polisario which "in response to an appeal from Paris" has "made many sacrifices and concessions" to ensure that the peace plan sees the light of day, he argued. He would therefore deem it "highly regrettable or even damaging to peace, stability, and respect for international law in the Maghreb region" for the Elysee and Quai d'Orsay to refuse to receive him, his aim being to "try to save the peace plan." The requests for audiences with the president of the republic and the foreign minister by the Polisario representative in Paris on 15 April have so far not met with any response.

On Friday 15 May, the Quai d'Orsay said that Mr. Abdelaziz's visit was of a "private nature" and that his talks "will be private." France "is not sparing any effort to settle this matter in the framework of and with respect for the right of peoples to self-determination," Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, deputy Quai d'Orsay spokesman, said.

Paris has never recognized the SDAR. But, Mr. Abdelaziz points out, Polisario representatives have met with Moroccan envoys several times in Algiers, Bamako, Lisbon, and Switzerland, not to mention a meeting with King Hassan II himself in Marrakesh in January 1988. "France cannot be more royalist than the king," he said.

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Labor Minister Interviewed on 1992 Plan

92AE0400A Ta'izz AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
1 May 92 pp 6-7

[Interview with Minister of Labor and Vocational Education 'Abd-al-Rahman Dhiban on occasion of May Day by Muhammad al-Sani; place not given: "Government's Plan for 1992 Labor Year"—first paragraph is AL-JUMHURIYAH introduction]

[Text] Our country has experienced difficult economic conditions during the past two years in light of the harsh surrounding circumstances. Many economic obstacles have emerged before the reunified state. Foremost among these was the return of Yemeni expatriates, adding to the previous oversupply of workers. The phenomenon of unemployment became more serious in our country, portending a social danger whose harbingers we can now perceive. As we experience and share the May Day celebrations with our workers under these circumstances, what plans and accomplishments is the government going to offer workers for the new year? What is new in the plan of the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Education for this year? What new job opportunities will it provide for the domestic labor force? How far has it come in its projects to train and qualify these workers and substitute them for foreign workers, given the divided labor laws from which many of our workers are still suffering? What has been the fate of the new labor law? How much progress has there been with it and with the law to regulate trade unions? Our workers continue to look on these two laws with hope that they will rescue them from oppression and arbitrariness. As the new labor year dawns, are there hopeful signs that our country's terrible unemployment will be eliminated through new investments and investors in the areas of oil, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism? AL-JUMHURIYAH had a long meeting with the minister of labor and vocational training, 'Abd-al-Rahman Dhiban, hoping to obtain assurance about these things. Now, the interview, which the newspaper conducted on the occasion of the May Day international labor holiday.

Labor Ministry's 1992 Plan

[Al-Sani] Our first question to the minister of labor and vocational education is about the Labor Ministry's plan for 1992 in general, especially in the area of finding new job opportunities for the Yemeni labor force in view of the terrible unemployment now widespread in our country.

[Dhiban] First of all, I want to use the occasion of the second anniversary of the great day, the day of unification, to congratulate our great Yemeni people and our political leadership embodied in our president and leader, 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, his vice president, 'Ali Salim al-Bid, and the members of the Governing Council. I wish our Yemeni people all progress and prosperity.

The ministry's 1992 operating plan embraces many issues. Some of these relate to the ministry's ordinary work that it performs in the area of labor inspection, inviting foreign workers, and finding jobs for domestic workers. In the area of inspection and vocational education, the plan embraces a number of issues. The most important is the effort to finish drafting the labor law, the trade union regulation bill, and the proposed organizational regulation for the ministry.

The labor law, the trade union regulation bill, and the proposed organizational regulation for the ministry have

all been completed by the ministry and have been submitted to the relevant authorities.

Substituting Yemeni Workers

[Al-Sani'] What about finding new jobs for Yemenis this year?

[Dhiban] As for finding jobs, the unemployment problem indeed is worsening daily in our country, especially after the return of more than a million expatriates from abroad. Jobs these days are still scarce due to the lack of new economic activities to absorb additional Yemeni workers. Despite these conditions, following the 1991 cabinet decisions to substitute Yemeni workers for foreign workers in a number of fields, the ministry conducted a series of talks and discussions with employers. We spoke to more than 180 establishments and companies in the private sector about the substitution question. We agreed with them on gradual substitution programs, so as to respect existing contracts and the need for foreign labor, especially in a number of essential specialties.

I really would like to express my thanks to many private-sector companies for cooperating and responding to the ministry in approving substitution and training programs. The substitution process must not take place haphazardly or affect the productivity of these companies. First, we in the ministry and the employer must be assured that his productivity will be maintained and that he really has been able to qualify the Yemeni cadre.

Response of Large Employers

I have already mentioned how we discussed with them the matter of substitution and training programs and what was agreed on. The ministry notifies the relevant governorates to begin dealing with each company under the protocols we sign with that particular company.

[Al-Sani'] Have you seen a favorable response to date from these companies in the matter?

[Dhiban] There has been a favorable response from large employers in particular. This is something good. Some of the small employers have not responded, to tell the truth. The large employers have responded to us in what we call the substitution and training programs. As for some of them, just from a visit I made to Ta'izz, Ibb, al-Hudaydah, and other cities, I personally saw during my visit to some economic installations that there were training programs and centers in some of them. This is really encouraging, because it is helping us qualify Yemeni workers to serve the needs of the labor market.

Agreement on Training, Qualification

[Al-Sani'] What about the process of training and qualifying Yemeni workers? What progress has the ministry made in the process of adding vocational institutions and schools?

[Dhiban] As for training and qualifying, during this year, in the context of the ministry's 1992 plan—as you may have heard—we have agreed with our German friends on the preparation of a comprehensive, sector-wide study on the state of technical and vocational education in the Republic of Yemen and on prospects for its development. A German team of experts came and, with the participation of a number of Yemeni experts, made a comprehensive survey of the various governorates of the Republic of Yemen. They prepared a preliminary report, which we discussed at a conference we held for the purpose. We now expect to receive the final study during the month of May, God willing. Future prospects and development areas will be defined in light of the study. We will move to contact foreign and domestic funding agencies, with the goal of guaranteeing that the necessary funding is obtained to implement at least some of the projects contained in the study.

Comprehensive Study of State of Training

[Al-Sani'] Does the ministry have new projects for establishing specialized institutes and schools this year or next year to train and qualify the Yemeni labor force?

[Dhiban] We tried to make this a comprehensive study of the state of vocational training in the Republic of Yemen, even including the handicapped and women and how to incorporate them into development in various ways. We now hope the study will generate a number of projects. Of course, we shall have to wait to see. Our 1992 investment plan includes a feasibility study of the establishment of four training institutes: one in Ma'rib, one in Ibb, one in Hadramawt, and the last in Shabwah. We have already begun preparing the study and hope to complete it, God willing. If it demonstrates the feasibility of constructing these projects in these governorates, they will be included in our 1993 plan for implementation.

Opportunities from Algeria, Germany

In addition to the training and qualification area, we have obtained a number of opportunities from Algeria and Germany for some of our cadres in training institutes. I can say that we have fully utilized these opportunities and have sent a number of trainees to Germany and Algeria. They will return with higher levels of training and transfer their knowledge to the ministry's training centers.

Labor Law in Cabinet

[Al-Sani'] Why has the labor law still not been promulgated, although the domestic labor force needs a new law to protect it, instead of the divided laws in effect until now?

[Dhiban] We as a ministry first completed preparation of the law, but we did not want it submitted to the cabinet until it was discussed with the two sides involved with production—employers and workers. We therefore formed a trilateral committee consisting of government,

employers, and workers. They discussed the proposed law in all its details. Once the discussion was completed, we submitted the bill early in March to the cabinet for discussion and subsequent submission to the relevant authorities for promulgation. During the discussion, we introduced some amendments to the bill. We expected it to be among the laws promulgated during the month of Ramadan.

Unions, Labor Law Debate

[Al-Sani'] You mentioned trade union participation in the discussion of the law. Who represented them in the trilateral committee? Were they satisfied with the final draft of the proposed law?

[Dhiban] The committee was trilateral, as we have already mentioned. Participants on behalf of the government included the Ministries of Labor, Civil Service, Social Security, Industry (as responsible for investment), and Legal Affairs. On behalf of employers, many employers participated in the name of the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The General Federation of Trade Unions also participated with its own representatives. An agreement protocol was signed by the three sides participating in discussion of the law. Of course, some differences in point of view emerged, which were reflected in the protocol. These were submitted to the cabinet, which afterward resolved them.

Law, Disagreements on Certain Sections

[Al-Sani'] Do you expect the law to be promulgated soon, so as to resolve problems between employers and workers and end the situation of having two laws from the two former halves of the country?

[Dhiban] I personally want it to be promulgated as quickly as possible, because we want to end the present situation of two laws from the two halves of the country. There is no doubt that the proposed new law represents something good, compared with the two existing laws. We tried as much as possible for it to be balanced and respect the interests of the two sides of production: workers and employers. We think there was great satisfaction on the part of employers and workers. This can be inferred from the committee that discussed the law. Naturally, there was disagreement about some sections; however, there was great satisfaction generally about the proposal.

Unions Participate in Discussing Their Law

[Al-Sani'] Why has the proposed law to regulate labor unions still not been submitted to parliament for debate and passage? Where is it now?

[Dhiban] This proposed law was drafted some time ago, during the unification discussions. Many comments about it emerged afterward. A committee was formed from the Labor Ministry and the General Federation of Trade Unions; the bill was redrafted in another form,

and then it was submitted to a committee chaired by Mr. Muhammad Haydarah Masdus, the deputy prime minister for development of human resources. It was then supposed to be submitted for passage, but it has not been passed yet.

[Al-Sani'] Did the committee that discussed the bill pay attention to trade union comments on it?

[Dhiban] Disagreement emerged on only one or two points. There was no disagreement about the law itself, because this latest proposal was drafted by the committee formed by the ministry and the General Federation of Trade Unions. We in fact had asked our brothers in the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry to provide us with any comments they had about the proposal, with the intention of also submitting their comments when the bill was discussed in the cabinet. Unfortunately, we received no comments from them about it.

All Obligated To Carry Out the Law

[Al-Sani'] After the law is passed, do you expect all parties, particularly employers, to abide by it?

[Dhiban] The assumption is that all parties will adhere to carrying out the law. Everyone must appeal to the law as an arbiter. The law must be our authority. If we have comments about the law, let us strive to submit these comments to the authorities who have the power to amend the law, so that it can be changed. What is required of the government, the unions, and employers is that they abide by the law in the form in which it shall be passed. In fact, the first step of coordination has taken place, namely the drafting of the bill by the government and trade-union side. If the law is discussed in legislature, it, as a lawmaking authority, has the right to amend any section of the law it sees fit to amend. Naturally, everyone must respect such an amendment and the formula that emerges from the legislature.

Labor Council To Bring Together Both Sides of Production

[Al-Sani'] What about the ministry's relationship now with the General Federation of Trade Unions and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry? Is there coordination with them to study or solve any problems in the area of labor and workers?

[Dhiban] In fact there are good relations among us. There is coordination between us and the General Federation of Trade Unions and between us and the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce on many issues. We hope this relationship will improve because the provisions of the proposed labor law contain a section dealing with the formation of a labor council from the three sides: government, employers, and workers. When the labor law is passed, the labor council will be formed and will represent a good foundation for further meetings and conversations, for coordination, and for discussion of many issues of concern to labor and workers.

This council will have a number of tasks and powers involving the issue of making recommendations to the government in the area of salaries and administrative measures to implement the law. It is a good thing for the three sides involved in production to meet around one table and discuss all issues and subjects of concern to them.

Solution by Stimulating Investment

[Al-Sani'] Do you expect the areas of investment in our country to provide jobs for Yemenis if the activity of foreign, Arab, and Yemeni investors begins? When do you expect to begin considering the applications of investors?

[Dhiban] The investment law, as you know, has been passed, and the General Investment Authority has been formed. I think the time has come for the government, as represented by the General Investment Authority, to energetically consider the applications of Yemeni, Arab, and foreign investors. We hear that many applications have been submitted. We think it will be very beneficial to the country if these applications are given positive consideration because they will have favorable effects on the country's general economic activity. If these projects take place, they will provide new jobs for Yemenis. For the only solution to the economic problem in our country in general is to stimulate investment.

We Must Not Rely Too Much on Oil

[Al-Sani'] Regarding oil exploration and extraction, in your view will this area provide new jobs for the Yemeni labor force, and when do you expect this?

[Dhiban] I see this as one of the areas of economic stimulation. Yet we must not depend too much on oil to solve our problems. It must be a means, not an end.

Naturally, it will provide new jobs. But establishing a number of investment projects in manufacturing, agriculture, commerce, and tourism—these are projects that can be implemented faster. Oil surveys take time. Until the oil can be exploited, we shall need a great deal of time. Small projects, on the other hand, especially ones not concentrated on the big cities—those are the projects we want: ones that go into the countryside and keep people from moving to the big cities, ones that keep people settled in their villages and small cities. We want balanced development in the country. We do not want four or five cities in our country to prosper while our other villages live in a state of poverty and misery, economic and otherwise. The solution is providing more jobs, and these projects will bring them.

Coordination between Oil and Labor Ministries

[Al-Sani'] Our last question is about the agreements being concluded between our country and the oil exploration and extraction companies. Are these agreements fair, and do they provide for employing and training the local labor force?

[Dhiban] Of course; there are clear indications of it. However, the initial stages, those of exploration and surveying, generally require specialized kinds of skills. The production stages—those, naturally, are the stages that in fact will need various specialties—ordinary workers, skilled workers, engineers, experts, etc. Nonetheless, there is coordination between us and our colleagues in the Oil Ministry through a committee we have formed. It considers the companies' requests for foreign and domestic workers. The committee includes the deputy minister of labor and the head of the General Petroleum Organization. The committee is active, holding meetings approximately every month. It discusses worker issues and even problems that arise between the companies and workers.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Analyst Sees Possible Division of Afghanistan

92AS0903A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 20 Apr 92
p 4

[Article by Ray Singh: "Plans To Divide Afghanistan"]

[Text] The Afghanistan situation has entered such a serious phase that it has become a problem for India's foreign policy. On one side, several Afghan mujaheddin groups are bent upon resolving the Afghanistan issue by force. On the other side, in the northern Afghanistan, Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen tribal leaders are not only talking about dividing up Afghanistan, but also are preparing themselves for armed confrontations. During the first week of April, Lt. Islamuddin Khan, an Afghan military officer of Uzbek decent, announced the establishment of an interim government in northern Afghanistan. This announcement makes it clear that Kabul government's control over the regions where there is a majority of Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen tribes has virtually ended. It is important to mention that the announcement about the interim government was made after Afghan President Najibullah's statement on 18 March that he would resign if an interim government by majority vote is established. Northern Afghanistan tribals believe that if Najibullah leaves his position, a fundamentalist Pushtoon majority government would be established in Kabul. Their belief is not wrong because Golboddin Hekmatyar, the mujaheddin leader living in Pakistan and the leader of a fundamentalist party Hizbi Islami, has always said that Afghan problem can be solved by military and not political action. Another Afghan mujahid leader living in Pakistan, Rasul Sayyaf who is the leader of another fundamentalist party Ittehad-i Islam, also supports Golboddin Hekmatyar's statement. Another mujahid leader, Maulvi Mohammed Yunus Khalis is also backing Hekmatyar. All of these mujahid leaders have made it clear that they are not willing to accept the Five-Step Plan presented by the UN Secretary General's representative Benon Sevan. According to this plan a meeting of Afghan leaders from all groups is to be held in Geneva or Vienna in the near future. However, before it convenes, a 12-member interim government with Benon Sevan acting as moderator is to be established. Afghan leaders living in Pakistan, Hekmatyar, Sachiya, and Yunus Khalis have announced that they have nothing to do with either the interim government of the Afghan meeting to be held in Vienna or Geneva. The Afghan mujahid leaders in Iran have not made their stand clear, however, they have not given their full support to Benon Sevan yet. All of this appears even more bizarre because the governments of both Pakistan and Iran have declared their support for Benon Sevan while the Afghan mujahid leaders in both countries are opposing the Sevan plan. This can only mean that either Pakistan and Iran are agreeing with this plan just for show or the Afghan leaders living in these

two countries have other sources of financial and military assistance that they will use to fight even the United Nations.

It is not surprising that after keeping in view all these developments the northern Afghanistan Uzbek military leader Islamuddin has announced the establishment of his interim government. This way, he has warned that if a fundamentalist leader like Hekmatyar took over the government in Kabul then he would lose northern Afghanistan. This makes it clear that if an interim government is established after Dr. Najibullah's resignation, Afghanistan would be divided.

In addition to all these problems in Afghanistan, there is the serious situation of famine. Famine is prevalent even in Afghanistan's capital Kabul because of the scarcity of foodgrains caused by Afghan mujaheddin's guerrilla activities that resulted in all transportation coming to a standstill. In response to a UN appeal, Pakistan flew 10,000 tons of wheat to Kabul and Qandhar. Iran has no objection to airlifting wheat to Kabul, Qandhar, and Herat. Efforts will be made to make sure that military equipment is not sent by this route.

It is important to mention here that India has already agreed to supply 50,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan. This wheat can be sent only by air, however, this plan could not be implemented because of obstacles raised by Pakistan. A few years ago, an agreement was reached to provide medical supplies to Afghanistan, however, it is also being delayed. Because of this situation, India's image in Afghanistan has been damaged.

The greatest setback for India in Afghanistan would be when a fundamentalist government is established in Kabul, and as a result Afghanistan is divided. It would be a very difficult challenge to India should this happen. The division of Afghanistan will hurt not only Afghanistan, but also India. Until now, the basis of India's foreign policy in southwest Asia was the establishment of a neutral government in Kabul. If Kabul is controlled by Islamic fundamentalists, then India will have no base for its foreign policy in this region. Before this happens, India's foreign policymakers must reconsider their foreign policy and investigate other alternatives.

No one had talked about Afghanistan's division until now because such a possibility did not even exist. The talks about Afghanistan's division has started now after an article by Dr. Graham E. Fuller was published in THE NEW YORK TIMES. Dr. Fuller is a highly respected political analyst in the United States and is a member of the top U.S. analytic institute (Rand Corporation). Rand Corporation has played an important role in U.S. policy formulation. According to Fuller, Afghan General Abdul Rashid Dostam, who once commanded the special force composed 40,000 selected soldiers and officers for Dr. Najibullah, is negotiating with Uzbek and Tajik leaders in northern Afghanistan for dividing Afghanistan. We cannot dismiss Graham Fuller's statement as imaginary because he is such an expert on Afghanistan that none of

his forecasts have proved wrong. He is also associated with the U.S. intelligence agency, the CIA. We shall see what possibilities of Fuller's forecast being true are.

Before we analyze the present Afghan situation, it is important to know that General Abdul Rashid Dostam is an Uzbek himself and he has made it clear that he will not accept a government of fundamentalist Islamic Pathans. At present, Afghan guerrilla mujaheddin living in Pakistan are led by such fundamentalist Pathans like Golboddin Hekmatyar and Rasul Sachiya. They are bent upon Islamization in Afghanistan. Golbeddin Hekmatyar is an educated person and an engineer by profession, however, at present he is the leader of the most fundamentalist Islamic group in the world and his Peshawar-based mujaheddin group is the most powerful mujahid group. Hekmatyar claims that he has nothing to do with the communists and he is not willing to accept a government formed by a communist leader or member of the party in Kabul. He believes that all Afghan communists should be relieved of their right to vote. The other fundamentalist Afghan mujahid leader, Rasul Sachiya, has also made it clear that he would never be willing to talk with Najibullah Khan or any communist leader. The Afghan mujahid leaders have rejected the offer to talk on 10 April. Therefore, there seems to be no other possibility but the division of Afghanistan.

The situation has changed dramatically after it came under the control of the fundamentalist Afghan mujahid leaders. After the resignation of Najibullah, the government has gone into the hands of some generals and a northeastern mujahid group. However, it is difficult to say whether the mujahid groups in Pakistan will be able to change this situation or not. Currently, the situation is ready for a civil war based on ethnicity and regionalism. If this civil war became prolonged, then it would not be easy to stop the division of Afghanistan based on Pushtoon and non-Pushtoon tribes.

The important question now is whether the 1 million Uzbeks living in northern Afghanistan will merge their region with Uzbekistan or establish a new country. No one can say any thing at present. Similarly, it cannot be said whether the 4 million Tajiks will join Tajikistan. Both options are open, however, at present neither Uzbekistan nor Tajikistan would want any region of northern Afghanistan joining them. They would be accused of many things if this happens. Therefore, if fundamentalist Islamic mujahid groups come to power in Kabul, then Afghanistan will be divided and this would be a major challenge for India.

Ethnic Indian Merchants Said Facing Attacks, Expulsion

92ASI009A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 14 May 92
p 4

[Article by Ray Singh: "What Ethnic Indian Resident's Fears Arise From"]

[Text] On the night of 25 April, when different groups of the Afghan mujaheddin attacked Kabul with slogans of

"Long Live Jihad" and took over the city, all of Kabul and its atmosphere were full of the sounds of machine gun shots. At the same time, calls of "Allah-o-Akbar" were also raised from mosques in the city, along with readings of the Holy Koran on their loud speakers. The sky over Kabul was lit with the firing of machine guns, which symbolized the victory of fundamentalist Islamic forces in Afghanistan. It is true that after winning the important military and nonmilitary centers in the capital city of Kabul, Jam'iat-e Eslami Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud has beaten the pro-Pakistan mojahed groups of Golboddin Hekmatyar and Rasul Sayyaf of the Hezb-e Eslami. All in all, the victory in Kabul has been the victory of Islamic fundamentalism.

Of course, there was the victory of Islamic fundamentalism in Kabul. However, this victory has also given birth to a new civil war. It is difficult to think of the early results of such a war at this time. In the northern and northeastern parts of Kabul, Tajik leader Ahmad Shah Mas'ud has established his supremacy. This area is also being controlled by General Rashid Dostam, who was born here and is an Uzbek. Until only a few months ago, he was commander of the specially selected forces of 4,000 soldiers under President Najibollah. Gen. Dostam is also controlling Kabul's airport and television station. At this time, Uzbek Gen. Rashid Dostam is supporting Tajik Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud. However, nobody can say how long this friendship will last. The Uzbek and Tajik leaders have traditionally been each other's enemies. In addition, the Uzbek military commanders in this region are waiting for Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud to weaken a little, so they can start military action and control this region in the name of Afghanistan's Uzbek people. In the capital of Kabul and in other Afghan cities, some Najibollah supporters are still in power, and if the opportunity arises, they will join a group that has the upper hand and will catapult themselves back into power. It was said that there was an agreement between Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, Gen. Rashid Dostam, and the leaders of Najibollah's Watan Party leaders. According to this agreement, Golboddin Hekmatyar and other pro-Pakistan groups will not be allowed to establish a government in Kabul.

In addition to pro-Pakistan Pashtoon groups, pro-Tajik and pro-Uzbek groups, there are pro-Iran fundamentalist Shi'a groups who are taking advantage of the anarchy in Afghanistan and are controlling cities in the eastern region. These Shi'a military groups have the support of not only Iran, but also Iran's fundamentalist groups. Prominent among these are Harekat-e Enqelab-e Eslami, Mahaz-e Melli-ye Eslami, and Sazeman-e Pasdaran-e Jihad-e Eslami. The main goal of all these political groups is to establish Shi'a fundamentalism and Islamic rule in Afghanistan. This way, we can say that there is very little difference in their goals. At present, however, fundamentalist Islamic military groups have taken over power in Afghanistan, and each group believes that no other fundamentalist Islamic group will be allowed to establish a government there. All of this means that a civil war could start in Afghanistan at any moment.

Perhaps a civil war cannot be avoided; however, during the struggle over a civil war and after it, India will not be able to protect its national interests in Afghanistan. This is a cause for concern. In this context, it would be appropriate to say that before Islamic fundamentalists established control in Kabul on 25 April, Indian Foreign Minister Eduardo Faleiro said that India was concerned about fundamentalist control in Kabul. He thought that Afghanistan would become an independent and non-aligned country. It was not wrong for the foreign minister to express such a hope. However, if our foreign policy was more realistic, we would have been in a better position to deal with this situation. Unfortunately, reality in India's foreign policy is lost in our leaders' colorful dreams. One incident can prove this tendency.

It was learned on 21 April that Afghan President Najibullah had taken refuge in Kabul's UN office after relinquishing his office on 16 April. At that time, India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, France, and Germany wrote a joint letter to UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali requesting the United Nations to make arrangements for the safe departure of Najibullah from Kabul. In this letter, India and other countries had given their assurance of full cooperation, saying that they had full faith in the plan presented by Benon Sevan, special representative of the United Nations. The fact is that there was very little possibility of Sevan's plan being implemented, because neither Pakistan nor Iran had any interest in the plan. Both countries were busy finding a military solution to the Afghanistan problem. Perhaps, on the outside, Pakistan and Iran were asking for a political solution to the Afghanistan issue. As for the Russian republic, it was acting like a person who had been burned once and was extremely careful. The Russian republic has some interest in Afghanistan; however, it does not want to get stuck in its quicksand. As for France and Germany, they were looking for a market for their products, especially weapons, and Afghanistan was a very profitable market for them. Except for India, no other country had any interest in the welfare of former Afghan President Najibullah. When he requested political asylum from Pakistan, he was refused. Only India was willing to give him refuge.

After fundamentalist Islamic groups took over Kabul on 25 April, all Indians in Afghanistan were safe, according to the Indian Ambassador Nambiar and a spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry. Before issuing the statement it seems that they forgot that there are over 30,000 Hindus and Sikhs living in Afghanistan. Believing that they would be safe after fundamentalist Islamic groups took control in Kabul and that their interests would be protected was a mistake. According to a man returning from Afghanistan, about two months ago, more than 200 Indian people lined up daily outside the Indian Embassy for visas to return to India. Now there is no possibility of leaving Afghanistan, and the question of a visa does not arise. The fact is that the government has instructed the Kabul airport administration to investigate everyone who leaves by air. Since Gen. Rashid Dostam took over

Kabul's airport, the possibility of Indians leaving Afghanistan no longer exists.

One major problem for the Indian Embassy in Kabul is learning who is a native Indian in Afghanistan and who is an Afghan that has returned to Afghanistan after living in India. This is a major problem. There are thousands of Afghans who have lived in India and have Indian passports. They have lived in Afghanistan for the last two or three years. In order to solve this problem, the Indian Embassy in Kabul decided to issue certificates to Indian citizens living in Afghanistan. However, before this plan was implemented, the whole of Afghanistan was taken over by Islamic fundamentalists. Thus, this plan was never launched. The old saying that what happens slowly is done properly does not apply here. Still, in order to finish paperwork and to leave records on file, the Indian Embassy sent letters to thousands of Indian citizens in Afghanistan, advising them to maintain contact with the embassy. This action was taken when Afghanistan's postal service was nearly destroyed.

Living may not be impossible for the Hindus in Afghanistan, but it is very difficult. The reason is not religious, but economic. There, 70 percent of Hindus make a living loaning money, and receiving or paying interest is a great sin in a fundamentalist Islamic form of government. Therefore, it would be impossible for these Hindu traders to live in Afghanistan. Most of these Hindus are businessmen, and some work for the government. In a fundamentalist Islamic government, there would be no question of job security, and running a business would become very difficult. Iranian and Pakistani businessmen already have their eyes set on the businesses owned by these Indians. Ahmad Shah Mas'ud calls himself a moderate politician. However, he announced that a Shariat government would be implemented in Afghanistan to make it a real Islamic nation. This is what a moderate is planning to do. What will happen when pro-Pakistanis fundamentalist Sunni Islamic leaders like Golboddin Hekmatyar, Rasul Sayyaf, and Yunes Khales take power? We can only imagine.

At this time the Indian Government, instead of worrying about Najibullah's safety, should focus its energies on the protection of over 30,000 Indian Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan. If proper arrangements are not made to move Indian citizens from Afghanistan, a lot could happen. The fact is that the work of moving Indians from Afghanistan should have started when Russia and the United States signed the pact for noninterference in Afghanistan. If the Indian Foreign Ministry had analyzed the situation in Afghanistan correctly and had shown its alertness about Indian interests there, then the situation would have been entirely different.

BANGLADESH

New Indian Envoy Presents Credentials

92AS1020A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 30 Apr 92 p 12

[Text] The High Commissioner designate of India to Bangladesh, Mr K. Raghunath, presented his credentials

to the President, Mr Abdur Rahman Biswas, at Bangabhaban on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Presenting his credentials, the High Commissioner said that the Government of India attached the highest importance to friendship and cooperation with Bangladesh.

He said that India had high regards for achievement of Bangladesh in establishing and consolidating democracy and representative government and wished its every success in building a stable and prosperous nation.

Ministry Issues Statement on Communal Relations

92AS1021A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 26 Apr 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] The Ministry of Home Affairs, in a Press Note issued on Saturday night, termed as totally baseless and motivated the provocative statements made by some speakers on alleged communal discrimination at the biennial national conference of Bangladesh Mindu Bouddha Christians Oikya Parishad as reported in different national dailies on April 24, reports BSS.

The Press Note said the people of the country firmly believed in communal harmony. Members of all communities including the Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians have been living in peace and amity since long and thus set a unique example of communal harmony. This communal harmony has been further strengthened in the democratic atmosphere after assumption of power by the present Government, it pointed out.

The Press Note further said that the allegations of repression on the members of the minority communities in Bangladesh, occupation of their properties and temples and violation of human rights were absolutely unfounded and a travesty of truth. Certain quarters are making such imaginary allegations with ulterior motives, it said and pointed out that the people of Bangladesh, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, have been living in peaceful and utmost cordial atmosphere the Government is determined to maintain this atmosphere.

In the Press Note, the Government expressed the hope that the concerned quarters would refrain from making such irresponsible statements in the interest of maintaining the existing communal harmony and peace in the country.

Paper Reports Visit of Pakistan Army Chief

18 Apr Activities

92AS1023A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 19 Apr 92 p 1

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Visiting Pakistani Army Chief General Asif Nawaz on Saturday called on Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen

Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan at the Army Headquarters, reports UNB.

They discussed matters of mutual interest, said an ISPR [Inter-Service Public Relations] Press release.

Pakistani High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Anwar Kemal, was present on the occasion.

General Asif Nawaz also met with Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Altaf Hossain Chowdhury at Naval Headquarters at Banani, the Air Headquarters respectively.

The Pakistani Army Chief later called on Defence Secretary Anisur Rahman at his office at the Old High Court Building.

Earlier, on his arrival at the Dhaka Cantonment, General Asif Nawaz went to the 'Shikha Anirban', the eternal flame, and placed floral wreaths there in honor of the members of the Armed Forces martyred during the Liberation War in 1971.

He then went to 'Sena Kunja', a multi-purpose civic complex, where a smart contingent of Bangladesh Army presented a guard of honor. General Asif Nawaz inspected the guard and took salute. He also planted a sapling in front of the 'Sena Kunja'.

The Pakistani Army Chief later visited the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur.

The Commandant of the DSCSC, Major General Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman received the distinguished guest.

Call on Biswas, Jessore Visit

92AS1023B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 21 Apr 92 p 3

[Text] The visiting Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan, General Asif Nawaz called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban on Sunday, reports BSS.

During the meeting, President Biswas said that development and prosperity of the people were the main objectives of the present democratic government of Bangladesh.

He stressed the need for promoting further bilateral cooperation among the friendly countries including the Muslim ummah.

President Biswas expressed the hope that friendship between Bangladesh and Pakistan would continue to be strengthened in the days ahead.

He conveyed his greetings and best wishes to Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

General Asif Nawaz conveyed to President Biswas the greetings and best wishes of the Pakistan President and the Prime Minister.

He stressed mutual cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan particularly in the field of science and technology.

Chief of Army staff, Lt Gen Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, Defence Secretary Anisur Rahman, Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka, Anwar Kemal and members of Pakistani delegation were present.

Visits Jessore

A Jessore report adds: The Chief of Army Staff Pakistan, Army General Asif Nawaz visited Jessore on Sunday and ISPR [Inter-Service Public Relations] release said.

On their arrival at the exercise area of the Local Army Division, General Asif Nawaz and members of his entourage were received by the Jessore Area Commander, Major General Ahsanullah.

The distinguished guests then witnessed a demonstration on assault river crossing staged by the officers and troops of the area.

General Asif Nawaz and members of his entourage were visibly impressed by the demonstration.

Earlier General Ahsanullah briefed the distinguished guests on different aspects of the demonstration.

Call on Prime Minister

92AS1023C Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 23 Apr 92 p 1

[Text] Pakistan Army Chief, General Asif Nawaz called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her residence Wednesday evening, reports BSS.

The Pakistan Army Chief was accompanied by Begum Asif Nawaz.

Chief of Bangladesh Army, Lt Gen Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan and Begum Khan were present.

23 Apr Departure

92AS1023D Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 23 Apr 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Chief of Army Staff, Pakistan Army, General Asif Nawaz left Dhaka on Thursday after a week long visit to Bangladesh, according to an ISPR [Inter-Service Public Relations] Press release, reports BSS.

General Asif Nawaz, Begum Asif Nawaz and other members of his entourage were given a hearty send-off at

the Zia International Airport by Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan and Begum Sophia Khan.

Other senior army officers were also present at the airport to bid farewell to the distinguished guests.

Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mr Anwar Kemal was also present.

Earlier Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan and Begum Sophia Khan called on the Pakistan Army Chief of Staff, General Asif Nawaz and Begum Asif Nawaz at the state guest house Padma prior to their departure from Dhaka.

Navy Team

The eleven-member goodwill delegation of the Pakistan Naval Staff College left Dhaka on Thursday afternoon ending its week-long visit to Bangladesh.

During their stay in the country, members of the delegation called on the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam at the Naval Headquarters.

The delegation members also called on the Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan at the Army Headquarters and the Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Altaf Hossain Choudhury at the Air Headquarters.

Bangladesh Aid Consortium Meets in Paris

22 Apr Meeting, Pledge

92AS1030A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 23 Apr 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Paris, 22 April: The Bangladesh Aid Consortium meeting today pledged 2.2 billion U.S. dollars fresh foreign assistance for the fiscal 1992-93 endorsing the economic policies of the democratically elected Government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports BSS.

This pledge is in addition to 600 million U.S. dollars promised recently to finance flood protection plan and it did not take into account the assistance donors might provide to help Bangladesh cope with Rohingya Muslim refugees crossing the border from Myanmar to escape the brutality of the Myanmar troops, a spokesman told BSS Wednesday night after the two-day meeting.

The Government has won much praise for its sound fiscal and monetary policies and our request have been met, he added.

Joseph Wood, the World Bank Vice President and Chairman of the Bangladesh aid consortium presided.

Finance Minister, M. Saifur Rahman led the six-member Bangladesh delegation.

Earlier reports says, Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman said here today promotion of sustainable growth, development of private sector, improvement of investment climate to attract foreign investment and alleviation of poverty were the basic objectives of the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government.

Speaking at the Aid Consortium Meeting here, the Finance Minister said the issue of human resource development would be addressed on a priority basis. For achieving this objective, the Government has placed emphasis on primary and nonformal education, primary health care and family planning, he added.

The Finance Minister told the representatives of the donor countries and multilateral agencies that combating corruption, establishment of transparency and accountability at all levels of the Government were the major elements of the Government's economic policy. The policy of the Government also aimed at more efficient public resource management, restoration of discipline in the public sector along with determined pursuit of loan defaulters, improvement of loan recovery and creation of a competitive economic environment through deregulation and liberalisation, he added.

He further said the Government also sought to eliminate the rent seeking activities by the privileged few, enhance operational efficiency of the public sector enterprises and improve the area of public investment and utilisation of foreign aid.

Mr. Saifur Rahman, who led the Bangladesh delegation to the Aid Consortium meeting, said the Government intended to enlarge the size of the ADP [expansion not given] for fiscal 1993 to Taka 85 billion-up by 9 per cent from the level of fiscal 1992. The public investment programme, he said, would concentrate on infrastructure, human resource development, women in development and environmental development. The procedure for project appraisal and approval had already been simplified and decentralised, he said adding, "We had already benefitted from the new approval procedure, backlog of 300 projects at the beginning of the current fiscal year has been cleared in addition to disposal of the new projects."

Rohingya issue

Referring to the problem caused by the influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, the Finance Minister said the Bangladesh Government was trying its best to reach peaceful settlement with the Myanmar Government so that the refugees could go back to their home with a sense of safety and security. He called upon the international community to prevail upon the Myanmar Government for expeditious return of the refugees.

In this connection, Mr. Saifur Rahman pointed out that Bangladesh has one of the highest density of population which creates pressure on its fragile environment. The addition of over a quarter of a million refugees exacerbated the pressure and posed additional threat to the

environment. It had strained our administrative and institutional resources, a part of which has been switched from development management to refugee management, he added.

Mr. Saifur Rahman said his Government sought short term macroeconomic stabilisation through demand management. But the domestic economic turndown compounded by uncertain and recessionary external conditions made it difficult to implement such a programme. Nonetheless, the firm determination of the Government made it possible to achieve the objectives substantially, he said.

Explaining in details the economic policy of the Government, he said the three major objectives in fiscal management were stronger efforts at revenue mobilisation which included introduction of VAT [expansion not given], control of current expenditure and enlarged public investment programme. Project processing and approval procedures have been simplified to facilitate quick Government approval and implementation of projects, he added.

The Finance Minister told the consortium meeting that the introduction of VAT and improvement in tax administration and procedures had produced positive results. VAT collection for the first half of fiscal 92 exceeded the budget estimate, he said.

He said more stringent laws had been enacted for loan recovery and additional loan courts had been established for more effective enforcement of the legal procedures. He enumerated steps to improve the performance of power and gas sectors, streamline the railway administration, and rationalise the jute industry.

Industrial policy

Mr. Saifur Rahman said the revised new industrial policy of the Government envisaged further liberalisation. New incentives have been provided for exports which will stimulate the growth of export oriented industries. In this connection, he highlighted steps taken by the Government to attract foreign investment.

Turning to the process of liberalisation and privatisation in food and agriculture sectors, he said the private sector's participation in import and distribution of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizer, had been expanded. The private sector has been allowed to import foodgrains, and restriction on bank credit for trade in foodgrains has been withdrawn. He said and hoped that these measures would help stabilise supply and prices while reducing the burden on the public sector.

The Finance Minister frankly told the Aid Consortium meeting that the Government inherited an administration virtually crippled by inefficiency, unabated corruption and suffocating centralism. Transforming such an authoritarian corrupt system to a democratic, participatory and transparent system was a formidable task, he said.

He further said sluggishness in the domestic economy was compounded by the uncertainty and recessionary trends in the external economic environment. Finally, the country also had its share of natural calamities, floods in the northwestern and northeastern parts of the country and cyclone in the southeast caused extensive damage, he said.

Disinvestment

Mr. Saifur Rahman told the meeting that the Government identified forty-two public sector units for disinvestment during the fiscal 1992. Narrating how social and political constraints stood in the way of disinvestment, he said the Government was determined to carry through this programme. For this purpose, a privatisation committee had been set up.

Touching on agriculture, the Finance Minister said the objective of the Government was to raise the growth rate of agriculture from 3.5 to 4 per cent over the medium term. He said a rural credit guarantee fund or a disaster compensation fund would be set up to protect the poor farmers from the vagaries of nature. The fund would act as a compensation mechanism to cushion the farmers who may face natural disaster, he said.

He categorically said the Government would pursue a policy to restrain labour unrest and establish an appropriate relationship between wages and productivity.

More Details on Meeting

92AS1030B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 23 Apr 92 p 10

[Text] World Bank and IMF at the Paris Consortium meeting criticised crucial weaknesses in Bangladesh's budgetary management and reform programmes but recommended continued donors' support to Government efforts to correct the lapses, reports UNB.

Fattening size of Government, dismal performance of leading public enterprises, poor management, decision dilemma in ADP [expansion not given] implementation, corruption and inefficiency in power and jute sector, diversion of subsidies to privileged sectors were among the major issues that earned the donors' dissatisfaction on the first day of the Paris meet on Tuesday.

Lifting the Bangladesh economy which still moves with low savings and investment will require "high level" of donors' support to reinforce and complement government efforts, said World Bank representative Pradip Mitra at the inaugural session of the meet, according to a message received in Dhaka on Wednesday from the French capital.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) representative Ichiro Otani pointed out stagnance in agreed reforms in several areas, particularly in privatisation of public enterprises and rationalising losses in the state-run units.

But he simultaneously said government "efforts cannot succeed without active donor assistance."

Ichiro Otani, IMF Division Chief for Central Asian Department, recommended for the donors to continue "strong support" to Bangladesh as the country cannot afford recourse to nonconcessional borrowing.

Both the Bank and the Fund, the institutions usually speak for the Aid Club members, were strongly critical of the government for failing to keep pace with many of the reform programmes.

Macroeconomic performance, revenue collection in particular, was, however, appreciated.

The two-day annual meeting of Aid-to-Bangladesh Consortium, sponsored by the World Bank, ended Wednesday.

Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman represented the country at the meet where he sought from donors 2.15 billion U.S. dollar in aid for next fiscal's development budget.

World Bank singled out four losing enterprise—Power Development Board (PDB), Railway, BJMC and BJC—and suggested urgent steps to cut their loss to rational size.

Improvements in the budgetary management would not be effective in increasing public savings unless efforts are made to "control the rapid growth of personnel costs and strong actions are initiated to stem the growing losses of public sector corporations," warned Pradip Mitra, World Bank economist.

"Bad management and corrupt practices," Mitra said, "have become deeply embedded in the PDB and the government must be willing to confront directly the special interest groups that benefit from these practices, both employees and customers, to resolve the problem."

The Bank suggested setting up of feasible targets and monitorable action plans over the next year to improve operational and financial performance of the corporations.

"Further delays in implementing credible reform programmes can only result in higher costs to the economy," Pradip Mitra said.

The IMF representative had similar observations about the public enterprises.

Criticising government's subsidy strategy, World Bank pleaded elimination of food distribution channels which are not targeted to the poor.

Appreciating government's emphasis on education and health and planning, World Bank suggested special attention to nonformal education, provision for scholarship to increase secondary school enrollment by female students and nutrition programme aimed at vulnerable groups.

To accommodate the programmes in scarce budgetary resources, the Bank asked for curtailing what it called nonessential activities such as expansion of medical colleges and excessive subsidies for secondary and higher education.

Greater NGO [Non Government Organization] participation in education and health programmes was also suggested for better cost-effective operations.

The IMF representative, appreciating the country's revenue performance in the current budget, suggested strong revenue mobilisation efforts in the coming budget (1992-93).

Removal of VAT exemptions and higher revenue from public enterprises were suggested by the Fund to mobilise additional revenue.

Cuts in subsidy and transfer to public enterprises and diversion of additional spendings to poverty-oriented programmes were recommended by the Fund.

It appreciated overall macroeconomic performance but, at the same time, suggested acceleration of reform programmes, particularly in privatisation of public enterprises and tariff liberation.

Additional action was asked for further liberalising interest rates on loans and strengthening bank finances.

Full implementation of the industrial policy was strongly suggested by the donors to remove structural impediments to private investment.

IDA Loan Agreement Signed at World Bank

92AS1024A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 29 Apr 92 p 7

[Text] Washington, Apr 28: The International Development Agency (IDA) will extend to Bangladesh a loan of U.S. dollars 25.5 million, for providing credit to the private industrial sector, reports BSS.

An agreement to this effect was signed here yesterday by Mr Joseph Wood, Vice-President, South Asia region, World Bank [IBRD] and Mr Abul Ahsan, Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States.

The loan will facilitate the implementation of the dollars 50.7 million private sector industrial credit project. Credit to private entrepreneurs will be extended through four participating financial institutions namely, ABB, IPDC, IFIC and UCBL [expansions not given]. The project is intended to promote ongoing financial and industrial sector reforms initiated by the Government of Bangladesh, and supported by the World Bank.

This is the first IDA project in Bangladesh to channel credit through private commercial and investment institutions, outside the usual official system. IDA is the specialized agency of the World Bank to provide assistance to selected developing countries at a concessional rate of interest. Besides promotion of industries, the

project envisages development of environmental guidelines for selected industries.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at the World Bank headquarters, Mr Wood lauded the recent economic performance and reform measures initiated by the Government.

Mr Abul Ahsan thanked the World Bank for its continued support to Bangladesh.

Democratic League Central Committee Meets

91AS1025A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 25 Apr 92 p 10

[Text] The Central Committee of Democratic League, in a meeting on Friday, demanded an immediate fresh session of the Jatiya Sangsad to pass necessary law for the trial of Pakistani national and controversial Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Professor Golam Azam, on charges of his war crimes against the country's Liberation War.

Presided over by party chief, Mr Oli Ahad, the meeting said that the lust for power, indecision, lack of a positive direction and subtle tricks of the present government in handling the Golam Azam issue had brought the nation to a point of confrontation. The meeting asserted that the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government must bear the consequence of the crisis created due to its indecision on Golam Azam issue.

The meeting observed that the nationalist feeling of the people in the country was based on the spirit of the Liberation War in 1971. It reiterated that there could be no compromise on this feeling. Pointing out the crimes committed by Golan Azam and other collaborators of the Pakistan occupation army during the Liberation War, the meeting ruled out the argument that there should be no trial now as it was done earlier. The meeting regretted that the Governments of Sheikh Mujib, General Zia, Sattar and General Ershad failed to hold the trial of the collaborators as war criminals.

Criticizing the BNP government for its failure in solving the Farakka issue and ensuring the due share of Bangladesh, the meeting felt that the Government should resign for its failure. It also blamed the government for pursuing a policy of appeasement to settle the outstanding issues with India.

The meeting condemned the Government for its total failure to improve the stagnant national economy, curb terrorism, and ensure the security of life. It observed that, as the BNP government has failed to solve any national problem, it had no moral right to stay in power, a Press release said.

Jatiya Leaders Demand Fresh Elections

92AS1022A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 25 Apr 92 p 1

[Text] The two-day meeting of the central working committee of Jatiya Party, which concluded in Dhaka on Thursday, demanded fresh elections in the country as the present government had failed to resolve the national issues, including the trial of war criminal Golam Azam, food scarcity, ensure independence of the judiciary, and check the deteriorating law and order situation.

Held under the chairmanship of Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, the Jatiya Party meeting called upon all the opposition political parties, the trade union and professional bodies to build up anti-government movement in protest against the repression and harassment of the political opponents, retrenchment of industrial and government employees and workers and to press the demand for release of detained political leaders and workers including H.M. Ershad.

Demanding trial of Golam Azam for war crimes, the meeting said as a pro-liberation party it was determined to uphold the spirit and values of the war of liberation.

SRI LANKA

Wijayapala Says Government Aims at Raising Standards

92AS0996B Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
2 May 92 p 5

[Article: "Government's Aim Is To Raise Socio-Economic Standards"]

[Text] "Since the present Government came into power under the leadership of President R. Premadasa, the Transport and Highways sector has received a great leap forward in almost every field of activity.

The national road development week program is launched to develop and modernise the network of rural roads in the country. "Our aim is to provide a new standard for the socioeconomic life of rural masses in the country" said Transport & Highways Minister Wijayapala Mendis addressing the final day felicitation ceremony of the Katana National Road Development Week held at Seeduwa-Ambalamulla New Playground, last Sunday.

The playground was ceremonially opened by Madam Hema Premadasa, President of the Seva Vanitha Organisation of Sri Lanka. The Katana Road Week was held from the 20th to 26th of this month.

Prior to the Janahamuwa, Mr. Susil Moonasinghe Chief Minister of the Western Provincial Council ceremonially opened the newly constructed Udammita-Alawathupitiya road by cutting a ribbon.

Transport and Highways Minister Wijayapala Mendis, Mr. K. Ananda Kuraratne State Minister for Highways, Mr. Lawrence Madiwela, Transport Minister of the Western Provincial Council, Mr. Sarath Pieris, Chairman of the Seeduwa-Katunayake Urban Council and Ms. Manori Rodrigopulle, Chairperson of the Katana Pradeshiya Sabha were also present at the ceremony.

During the Katana road development week program 332 village roads were developed. The total investment by the RDA [expansion not given], Highways Ministry, Urban Council and the Pradeshiya Sabha amounted to Rupees 1,400,000, thus saving Rupees 13,290,568—to the government. The final day of the road Week ceremony also coincided with the Sinhala-Hindu New Year celebrations organised by the Katunayake-Seeduwa Pradeshiya Sabha, Seeduwa police and Katana AGA [Assistant Government Agent] office.

In the morning, the three wheeler race, cycle races, cross country races and sports items were the main features. In the evening, the selection of Avurudu Kumari and the body builders display were the main features of the day's program.

Mr. Wijayapala Mendis said that National Road Development Week program is a five year rural road development plan implemented under the guidelines given by President R. Premadasa. Under this 5-year plan, it is hoped to develop 30,000 km of village roads. Already 25 National Road Development Week Programmes has been completed throughout the Island, another 20 programmes are scheduled to be completed during this year.

Mr. Mendis said the first lady of our country Madam Hema Premadasa has pioneered to inaugurate a pension scheme for the widows in our country, which he feels is a great tribute to the female members of our society.

Ven. Sumanawansa Thera, Mr. U.L.M. Farook State Minister for Transport, Mr. H.A.C. Wickramapala AGA Katana, Western Provincial Council members Mr. Davindra Wijaya Mendis, Ms. Nanda de Silva and Mr. Sarath Pieris Chairman Katana-Seeduwa Urban Council also spoke.

DAILY NEWS Criticizes Indian Foreign Policy

BK3005105792 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
19 May 92 p 8

[Editorial: "India at Crossroads"]

[Text] Abject servility and a total surrender of sovereignty—these are some of the catch phrases that are shrilly sounded in mounting criticisms of Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's current foreign policy initiatives.

Despite receiving resounding backing for sweeping economic reforms, which foreshadow an end to what was called "rigid socialist control" of the Indian economy,

the Rao administration seems to be on a dangerous collision course with sections of the opposition on the question of reorienting its foreign policy and giving it an unprecedented Western tilt.

The focus of current protests is the minority government's decision to conduct joint naval exercises with the U.S. This move is seen as a betrayal of the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement—a founding father of which was the legendary Jawaharlal Nehru, the father of modern India.

The most strident criticisms of these foreign policy changes have come from centrist and leftist parties. During a Lok Sabha debate on April 20, for instance, Syed Shahabuddin of the Janata Dal said that there was no clarity of vision or purpose in the government as far as foreign policy was concerned.

He cited the UN vote on Libya and the joint naval exercises plan with the U.S., as examples of this "short-sightedness." He added that India was becoming more and more subservient to the U.S.

The position of the government, however, is that the joint naval exercises were suspended in the 1960s, to keep the Indian Ocean free of the presence of the superpowers. Such a situation wouldn't arise now because the Cold War is no more. "Continuing with the earlier policy...would deprive our navy of the benefits of interactions with other navies," Defence Minister Sharad Pawar told the Indian Upper House recently.

The widespread sense of outrage which the joint naval exercises idea has fuelled, wouldn't be so intense if not for perceived U.S. pressure and intransigence on other issues, which have remained unresolved in Indo-U.S. relations today.

Chief among these is the question of nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia. Ever since the Kashmir issue exploded into prominence a couple of years back, Washington has been reportedly agenzizing over the possibility of a new Indo-Pakistani war in the subcontinent, involving the use of nuclear weapons.

It has cited this fear as the reason for calling for a five-nation conference involving India, Pakistan, China, the U.S. and Russia, on the question of having the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) ratified by both India and Pakistan.

Washington has been trying to impress on India, the need for signing the NPT without further delay, ever since the Cold War came to a close. India, however, would have none of this. Her position is that the NPT is discriminatory. It is seen largely as an attempt by the U.S. to deprive India of her legitimate right of self-defence in the face of perceived threats emanating from Pakistan.

The emotional issue of national sovereignty is very much at the heart of the matter. After all, a power of the status

of India, couldn't be seen as buckling under U.S. pressure or following its dictates.

In the meantime, other issues are also bedevilling Indo-U.S. relations. At present, the U.S. is fighting tooth and nail to prevent Russia from transferring rocket technology to India. The U.S. position is that the transfer would violate existing treaties on the subject. It has already imposed limited sanctions on India and Russia in this connection.

Whatever its intrinsic merits, the concept of nonalignment was initially used by India, not so much to maintain an "equidistance" between the superpowers, but to develop into a regional power, independent of the dominant power blocs. Today India is the predominant power in South Asia and even the U.S. acknowledges this.

It is only to be expected, therefore, that the notion of India's predominance would die hard among opinion—moulding groups and political parties in India, even when she is revamping her model of economic development and wooing Western finance and capital.

Indo-U.S. ties are apparently on a bumpy road to normalization. The ideal is equal ties—that is, a reciprocal relationship and not an unequal one, where the U.S. is seen as calling the tune. Indo-U.S. relations will therefore, turn out to be an acid test of Premier Rao's political acumen and skills.

The task before him will be to convince opinion at home that he is dealing on an equal footing with the U.S., while safeguarding the integrity of India—a tall order considering the magnitude of India's economic dependence under the new dispensation.

Tea Export Improvement, Opportunities Viewed

92AS0996A Colombo *DAILY NEWS* in English
2 May 92 p 6

[Article: "Successes, Failures and Opportunities"]

[Text] Plantation Industries Minister Rupa Karunatilake has returned to Sri Lanka from a visit to tea buying countries in the Middle East in time for today's celebration in connection with the death centenary of James Taylor, the Briton who pioneered our tea industry at Looecondra Estate up in the central hills. His visit to Syria and Saudi Arabia has proved productive at a time when tea has taken a double blow of drought-hit production losses and a very sharp price decline.

At Damascus, the minister signed an agreement with GEZA, the Syrian government's foreign trade organisation, under which the volume of tea it will purchase this year will be double last year's 7 million kg. In Jeddah, Mr. Karunatilake persuaded the vice-president of Saudi Arabia's biggest tea importing company to come here this month and wrap up procuring arrangements for 1992.

The plantations industries ministry is on record saying that the talks in Jeddah indicated that this one importer will take more than 10 million kg of packeted tea this year provided we can meet his quality and quantity requirement. Saudi Arabia is a vital market for our tea as we hold a 70 percent market share there. The arrangement the minister has been able to make with a single giant importer there is therefore most significant.

There is a lot of misinformation in the country about the position of tea in the national economy. While any school child knew some years ago that tea was our main hard currency earner, many people today believe that manufactured garments have toppled tea from the number one slot. That is not correct.

What is correct is that garments are the top foreign exchange earner in gross terms. But nearly all the shirts, blouses and other articles of clothing we produce are made of imported fabrics. There are many other imported inputs too. Our major input into export garments is the labour component which, in terms of employment, is most vital. But in economic terms, what we really earn from our garments industry is the value we add to the textiles and components which are tailored here into items of finished clothing.

Even today, 125 years after James Taylor planted our first tea at Loolecondera, tea exports are responsible for the lion's share of the country's net foreign exchange earnings. Last year, despite a 13 percent drop in tea earnings as a result of poor prices, the net earnings from tea exports exceeded that of garments by as much as 25 percent. Further, the tea industry provides the livelihood of over two and a half million Lankans.

That is how important tea is to us today and this must be appreciated at this time when the government is embarking on a big bold move of privatising the management of the State-owned plantations, the bulk of which are under tea. It must be stressed that only the managements are being privatised and the ownership will remain with the State. Too many vested interests, political and otherwise, are attempting to rouse the workers with the lie that the estates themselves are being privatised.

The land reforms of 1972 have proved to be an expensive failure. Profitable tax paying plantations have been run down in the two decades since the United Front government of the SLFP [Sri Lanka Freedom Party], LSSP [Lanka Sama Samaja Party] and CP [expansion not given] launched that experiment in what appeared to have been a panic reaction to the 1971 insurrection. The land reforms did not alleviate land hunger as they were intended or touted to do. Instead, they created a monolithic and inefficient State-owned plantation raj.

Mr. Karunatilake's visits to push our tea in the Middle East and North Africa are most important because these now are our main markets. These two geographical regions today absorb 95 percent of our packeted teas and tea bags as well as 65 percent of our bulk tea which is still our major export. The time when most of our tea went to the United Kingdom, Continental Europe and North America is long past.

The present minister's tenure has seen important agreements signed with major importers like Iran, Egypt and Syria. He has also visited Pakistan, once our biggest tea importer, to revive flagging interest there. Sri Lanka which once had as much as 70 percent of the big Pakistani market now has a measly 6 percent market share.

If we are to regain lost ground and hold the markets that we enjoy, our teas must be competitive both in terms of price and quality. Our production per hectare is very much lower than competing producers India and East Africa and we have been very slow in going into the CTC (cut, tear and curl) teas that the market demands. In terms of total production, CTCs account for only 3 percent of our teas despite our knowing years ago that we had to switch from the traditional black tea.

There are opportunities to seize in the various republics of the former Soviet Union who are big consumers. Prior to 1990, the USSR was the world's biggest tea importer with our exports there running at around 15 million kg per year. This year, the former Soviet republics have imported no tea from us up to now. It is essential that the picture is changed and a lot of effort must go into that area now attracting western aid. Mr. Karunatilake has been working hard in the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan. He must now look towards the new republics of the former USSR.

END OF

FICHE

DATE FILMED

23 June 1992